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VALDA HÂNEM.

(THE ROMANCE OF A TURKISH HARÎM.)

## CHAPTER XIII.

THE Pâsha was perplexed and disappointed. He was troubled about Valda, who seemed to have lost all interest in her life except on the evenings when she could go to the theatre. At first he was delighted that she should find so much interest and enjoyment in it. Margaret had gone with her, as he had planned, and he thought that he had found an innocent relaxation which would be a real pleasure to them both. But after a very few evenings, Valda gave up taking Margaret. The little Djemâl-ed-Din was troublesome about going to bed when he was left in the charge of the slaves, and Valda made this an excuse for leaving Margaret behind. The Pâsha was obliged to accept it, and to let his wife go with her friend Hamîda Hânem instead; but he did not like it. It was not what he had intended, and as he saw Valda growing more restless, discontented, and unhappy every day, he became seriously uneasy. He told her that he did not think the excitement could be good for her, she seemed to suffer so much from the reaction, and he suggested that she should give it up; but at this she burst into a passion of hysterical tears and sobs, and entreated him not to deprive her of the only amusement she had.

He then spoke to Margaret about it. In the course of an English lesson that he had with her one afternoon when Valda had gone out driving with Hamîda Hânem, he introduced the subject, and asked her opinion upon it. But Margaret was hampered by the recollection of the faith that she owed to Valda, and the Pâsha could get no help from her. She was even more concerned about Valda than he was, and she was as much disquieted by her growing intimacy with Hamîda as she was pained by her withdrawal of confidence from herself; but she felt that it was a subject on which her lips were sealed in speaking to the Pâsha.

Meantime the weeks were slipping on, and the theatrical season would soon be over; there was that consolation. The great fast of Ramazân was approaching, when, for the space of a whole month, night would be turned into day, and the gates of the palace and the *harîm* would be left to stand open from sunset to dawn. For himself, the Pâsha looked forward to this time with no very pleasurable anticipations. He always kept the fast religiously, and from sunrise to sunset he never permitted either food or drink to pass his lips, or the smell of tobacco to assail his nostrils; but he privately detested Ramazân and all its customs. He could not sleep in the day, and he

did not care to eat in the night, and thus deprived of his usual amount of rest and food, his health was apt to suffer ; he invariably felt wretched, and he not infrequently became ill. He did not himself find any particular pleasure, either, in the nightly visitings and junkettings with which most of the richer folks, who were able to sleep all day, contrived to turn the fast into an occasion of feasting ; but he thought that this might be a distraction for Valda, and if it were to be a means of preventing a reaction from the unwholesome excitement of the last few weeks, he felt that he could look forward to it with equanimity.

In the meantime the Pâsha was busily occupied in pushing forward the arrangements for providing the palace with the electric light on which he had set his heart. During Ramazân the whole household would be upset, and it would be impossible to get satisfactory work out of any Moslem. The workmen, indeed, were all of them Europeans,—French, English and Italian—and the fast would not affect them ; but the slaves, who were obliged to attend to their duties in the day after having been up half the night feasting and racketing, were always sleepy and sulky, and they might be counted upon to make things uncomfortable for everybody. It was desirable that the thing should be done before Ramazân, when the lighting of the palace would be especially important ; and the Pâsha pressed on the work by doubling the number of the men who were engaged upon it.

The palace, therefore, was invaded at this time by an army of blue-bloused Christians, who carried their tools and ladders into all parts of the *hârim*, and the negroes, whose task it was to watch them, had their hands full. The Circassians, who were as irresponsible as children, and were only kept out of mischief by the vigilance

of the negroes, found it a glorious opportunity for coquetry ; they enjoyed themselves vastly, frisking about where the workmen were engaged, and taking advantage of every happy chance that distracted the attention of the slaves to make play with their eyes round the corners of their veils.

"Oh, Marmozelle, Marmozelle !" one of them cried, waylaying Margaret one morning in the ante-room of the dining-saloon, where they were waiting for the arrival of the luncheon from the kitchens at the far end of the garden ; "oh, Marmozelle, don't you like the Monsieur with the blue eyes and the long fair moustache ?"

"What Monsieur ?" asked Margaret.

"The one in the hall outside,—why you passed him just outside the door on his ladder. Didn't you notice him, such a very beautiful Monsieur ?"

The girls crowded round Margaret, all laughing and talking at once, their bright black eyes sparkling, their comely, fair-complexioned faces beaming under the carelessly arranged handkerchiefs that confined their hair. They were all keenly interested in the matter, even two little girls of eleven and thirteen, who hung smiling and open-mouthed on the outskirts of the group ; but Margaret was shocked by their talk. Some of the remarks they made were highly indecorous, and she was afraid lest they should be overheard and understood.

"Hush !" she said authoritatively ; "it is very horrid of you even to think of such things, *pek fennah, choc fennah* (very bad, most bad) ; but to speak about them, and so loud,—how can you tell that the man may not have some knowledge of Turkish ?"

"*Haär, effen', haär !* (No, madam, no !)" the girls all shook their heads regretfully ; such a contingency as

that was not likely ; it evidently seemed to them to be too good to be possible.

Margaret stepped to the open doorway of the ante-chamber to observe the interesting workman, on whom she had not bestowed even a passing glance on her way in. He was indeed very near the door. Perched half-way up the ladder, he was busily engaged in fastening little bell-glasses on to the electric wires that had been twisted in among the cut-glass drops and pendants of the old-fashioned lustre. He was a tall man in the usual workman's suit of blue calico with wide, flapping trousers and a loosely-fitting blouse, and he seemed satisfactorily intent upon his work. His cap was well pulled forward over his eyes, and his head discreetly turned away,—for a very good reason ; Captain Fitzroy was not at all anxious to be recognised by Miss Grey.

Margaret hardly saw his face at all ; but she observed that he was soberly and steadily going on with his work, and that he paid no sort of attention to the Circassians, who crowded out after her, laughing and chattering, and peeping at him through their veils, and she was satisfied. She went back into the inner room without the faintest suspicion in her mind as to his identity, and though she tried to repress the foolish talk of the girls, it was not because she was afraid of his understanding their nonsense that she did it.

"Oh, Marmozelle !" cried Zuhra, a pretty little brunette with immense dark eyes and a soft peach-bloom on her cheeks, who was the most audacious of them all ; "how I envy you and Valda Hâinem ! The *harem* is finished now, and there are only the *selâmlek* corridors left to do ; we shall see these delightful

strangers no more, but you and Valda Hâinem pass through the corridors every day, and you can see them still. Fancy walking through, and no one to watch you—Ullah, Ullah, Ullah ! if I could only have that chance !"

She executed a sort of *pas seul* as she spoke, finishing up with the most fantastic of pirouettes, and Margaret perceived by the twinkle in her eyes that she was more than half in fun. It was impossible to be angry with her, and yet the delighted laughter with which her sally was received was not to be encouraged.

"How can you be so silly, Zuhra !" said Margaret reprovingly. "Of course I know that you don't really mean what you say, or else I should be angry with you. Haven't you some work that you could do instead of talking nonsense here ?"

This was a mild reprimand, but Zuhra was not destined to get off so easily. Old Anâna, who made it her business in life to keep order among the slaves, and did it by a system of spying and dropping upon them at unexpected moments, had been lurking in the dining-room for some time, and now, like a spider out of its hole, she rushed upon her prey, punching and pummelling her with all her might. She was a vigorous old woman still, in spite of her seventy years, and working herself up with shrill shrieks of rage and vengeance to the fullest exertion of her energies, she slapped and scolded with great effect.

"Take that, you daughter of a dog ! Good-for-nothing offspring of a burnt donkey, here you stand idling all the day long, while your betters are forced to attend to the table. You leave the salad-dishes to stand empty, while you waste your time with unprofitable conversation,—God blacken your face for it !"

Poor Zuhra began to cry. — Anâna was beating and abusing her so unmercifully that it was no wonder — but all the other slaves went off into fits of laughter, and the room was in an uproar when the negroes came in with the dinner-trays and joined their cracked voices to the fray. “She is the most troublesome of them all,” said the big Soudanese, giving Zuhra, as she escaped from Anâna, a rough push that thrust her against the dresser; “she gives us more work than all the others put together, Allah reward her !”

It was such scenes as this that formed the reverse side to the light and careless existence of the slaves, and Margaret could not look on at them without disgust and disapproval. Anâna had not said a word of blame about the levity of the girl’s remarks, and she had passed over in silence many much worse speeches from the others. The torrent of her wrath had been poured upon Zuhra only because she was in a bad temper at the moment, and wanted a convenient object to vent it upon.

Margaret was sorry for the poor girl when she saw her waiting at table with red eyes and a sulky face; and she was more than ever indignant when the old great-grandmother, who sat at the head of the table, noticed the girl’s expression and began to persecute her further.

“Ah!” she said, with an indescribable sound between a snarl and a growl, “you have been offending again, have you, and Anâna has been correcting you? Serve you right, idle pig that you are! What do you mean by that scowling face? Stop crying directly, I tell you!”

“Pêkeh, Effénden,” murmured Zuhra submissively, and dashing away the tears that had risen afresh to her eyes, she hastened to hand to the old lady one of the side-dishes of

raw turnips and salt and water which had got her into trouble.

“What has she been doing now, Anâna?” inquired the relentless old woman, plunging her jewelled fingers into the brine, and fishing out a plateful of the sliced turnips.

Anâna, on account of her great age and the confidential position she held in the family, was privileged to sit at the bottom of the ladies’ table, and she had a special bowl and horn-spoon of her own that she liked to use through all the courses. She pretended to be entirely absorbed in her basin now, and stuffed her mouth so full of *pilau* that her answer was unintelligible. To do her justice, she was not ill-natured after her fury had once subsided, and she considered that Zuhra had been punished enough for one day without coming in for a rating from the *biâgue Ana*. This old lady, the big mother, or grandmother, as she was called, was the mother of Valda’s mother, and therefore the great grandmother of the little Djemâl-ed-Din. She was a savage old thing, of repulsive habits and violent temper; and she was always growling and snarling at everybody who came near her, from her daughter and granddaughter down to the unfortunate slave whose duty it was especially to attend to her. She seemed to have some grievance against every member of the household, and the ladies had fallen into the habit of receiving her scoldings in respectful silence as a necessary evil that had to be endured. Margaret was often surprised by the patience and forbearance that they showed; but the Turks are brought up to pay great respect to their parents, and the privileges that are conceded to old age form a remarkable feature in their domestic life. This cross-grained and tyrannical old woman, who was over eighty years of age, and had no position in the house except that of

a mother-in-law a generation removed, was given precedence over everybody else, and was allowed to domineer and interfere as if her will were law. Her daughter was the only person who ever ventured to stand up to her, and it was she who now interposed to check her in her attack upon Zuhra.

"I beg of you, leave the girl alone Effen,'" she said rather peevishly. "Zuhra is my slave, and I don't wish her to be made to cry until she won't be able to see out of her eyes to finish the gown that she is sewing for me. No doubt Anāna has corrected her enough for whatever she has done amiss, and it is a waste of breath to go over it all again; besides I am not at all well to-day, and I cannot bear to hear scolding going on,—the noise affects my head."

The lady had indeed got her head tied up in the white bandage which was worn in the *harim* as a sort of outward and visible sign of indisposition. Whatever ailment the ladies might be suffering from, the first thing that they invariably did was to swathe their heads with bandages; and they might be seen going about, groaning with their hands pressed to their waists in a manner indicating no other affliction than indigestion, yet with their foreheads bound up all the same.

One of those feverish colds, which are so difficult to avoid in Egypt, was running through the *harim*; the ladies were feeling so miserable and ill with it that they were unusually cross; and the meal, which was generally cheerful and gay enough, was decidedly dismal that day.

Valda had not got her head tied up; but she was looking very ill, and she was obliged to admit that she had perhaps got a touch of fever. Her face was very pale, and her beautiful deep-set eyes had such dark

rings round them that they needed no additional pencilling to add to their brilliancy. Margaret observed her looks with concern, and begged her to be careful not to run any risks. "There is such a cold wind blowing to-day, you ought not to think of crossing the garden to return to the other side," she said at the end of the meal. "Will you not come through the *seldmlek* with me?"

"Perhaps it would be well," Valda answered; "but I cannot come just yet. My mother wishes me to remain with her for a little time. Would you mind going yourself through the garden, and leaving the keys with me? Then I can come with one of the slaves when I am ready."

Margaret, who had no cold and was not afraid of the wind, made no objection, and giving up the keys to Valda, she went at once to the other side in order to get Djemāl-ed-Din off to sleep before his mother should arrive. Unfortunately the little rascal was in a naughty mood that afternoon, and the united efforts of Margaret and Ayōsha were of no avail with him. When Valda came, he was howling and kicking upon the sofa in a state of furious rebellion, and nothing would do but that his mother should come and sing to him with her lute. Valda was looking as white as death, and she was so weary that she could hardly stand; but she turned a deaf ear to Margaret's entreaties that she would go and lie down, and signing to Ayōsha to bring her the lute, she sank down upon a low stool in the middle of the floor, and began to play. It was a curious deep-toned instrument, called an *aood*, that she used; something like a very big mandoline with strings of gut, and it made a wild droning accompaniment to a melancholy tune of

about five notes, that was the only recipe for sending Djemâl-ed-Din to sleep when he was in a perverse mood. To-day it was a task that required the hard labour of three people. Valda sat crouching upon the floor, patiently singing and thrumming, Margaret waved a big *sendâlic* (fly-scarer) to keep the flies off, and Ayôsha on her knees kneaded the springs of the sofa to rock the child until the perspiration poured down her face; and still, at the end of an hour, the rebellious little bare legs were cocked up in the air in defiance of coverlets, and the great brown eyes were wide open, fixed with a wakeful stare upon his mother's pale face.

"*Kûchuk Ana*," he said, interrupting the music suddenly.

"Yes, *Beyjîm*, what do you want?"

"You know that I am to be a soldier like *Pâsha bâbba* (Papa Pasha)?"

"*Avet, Beyjîm* (yes, Bey dear)."

"I shall fight for my country."

"My little Djemâl-ed-Din! Of course you will."

"It was for that that I was born; and if I am killed on the field of battle I shall go straight to Paradise."

"You will, my son."

"I want a red coat with epaulettes, and a soldier's cap, and a belt for my sword like the English Captain I saw galloping in front of his men at the Kasr-el-Nil barracks."

"*Pêkeh, Effen', Pâsha bâbba* shall bring them for you next time he goes into town; only go to sleep now."

"Shut your eyes, Djemâl darling," Margaret said to him in English. "Poor Mother is singing to put you to sleep, and she is getting so tired."

The child gave one grave glance at his mother, a long loving look that seemed meant to assure her of his affection, and then he closed his eyes obediently. In five minutes his

golden curls were at rest upon the pillow; he was asleep, and Valda's crooning, which had been growing fainter and fainter, died into silence.

Margaret handed the *sendâlic* to Ayôsha, whose duty it was to watch by the child while he slept, and turning to Valda, tried to persuade her to go and lie down in her room. "I rather want to go out to see a friend in the town this afternoon," she said in a whisper; "she has asked me to come to tea. You don't think you will want me for a couple of hours?"

"Oh no," said Valda at once; "go, and stay as long as you like. But it is very hot out of doors just now; you had better take a carriage, if it is far to go. Ask Manetinna to get you one."

Margaret stole out of the room, her spirits raised by the kind consideration which had spared her a hot and exhausting walk, and she hoped that Valda, left to herself, would get the rest that she so badly needed. But Valda was strangely restless, and no longer inclined to sleep. She sat still for a moment after Margaret had left the room, and then, leaving Ayôsha in charge of Djemâl-ed-Din, she passed out into the long workroom that adjoined the boudoir, where the slaves were generally to be found gathered together in groups upon the floor, singing and chattering over their sewing. This afternoon, however, they were all engaged in laundry-work in the spacious offices downstairs, and the room looked deserted and empty. Valda went to one of the four long windows, and, resting her head upon her hands, looked out into the glowing garden below. She was desperately unhappy, and the worst of it was that she could not tell why she should be. Life seemed to her worthless, and the precepts of resignation which had supported her for so long under its trials had suddenly lost

their force and become senseless, like the mocking figments of a false philosophy. Yet she was conscious that the fault must somehow lie in herself, and she tried with all the force of her will to stifle and forget the vague misery of longing that surged up in her heart.

"What does it matter whether I am happy or not?" she asked herself. "In a few years it will all be over, and then what difference will it make to me or to anybody else? I shall have done my duty to my husband and my country, and shall have left behind me a son who will perhaps be as great a soldier as his grandfather was before him. My little Djemâl-ed-Din! He thinks of nothing but war and battles already, and if he becomes a great general, and upholds the falling fortunes of his country, then I shall not have lived in vain. My life may bring me little joy, but without me the spirit and genius of my father could not have been transmitted to another generation, and who knows what a difference they may not make to the cause of Turkey and of Islam? Let me be content, and not think of myself at all. Can I not find something to do for others?"

Valda turned away from the window with a restless impulse to escape from the solitude in which she felt unable to repress the thoughts that assailed her. There was a quantity of fine sewing to be done which was beyond the powers of the slaves, and Valda, who was an accomplished needlewoman, was accustomed to give a good deal of time to it. She took it up now; but she could not settle to it; she could not sit still and sew in the silent and deserted rooms; she must have somebody to speak to.

The Pâsha was out; he had gone with a party of friends to Ghesireh, his favourite resort in the afternoon; and he would not be back till late.

Mademoiselle would also be out for some hours, no doubt, and Djemâl was asleep. There was nobody in this wing of the palace; but on the other side was her mother, feverish and fretting with a cold. Valda be-thought herself of a cooling drink that she knew how to make, and she resolved to prepare it and send it to her mother. For cooking and nursing Valda had a faculty that amounted to genius, and she had found by experience that there was nothing that could so effectually distract her mind from dwelling upon itself as some occupation of this congenial kind. She was busy over her spirit-lamp for the next half-hour, and when her operations were completed she felt comparatively happy and contented.

"This is really good," she said, her face brightening, as she tasted it; "I will pour it into my silver flask, and send it to her at once. I know she will like it, and she will be so pleased that I made it. I should like to take it myself, only I am afraid of crossing the garden with my cold——" She glanced out of the window, and saw that the wind was blowing about the great leaves of the India-rubber trees more wildly than ever. Then she remembered that she could go through the *selâmlek*; she had forgotten to restore the keys to Mademoiselle, and they were hanging from her waistband now. "I came through with Sacêda before; why shouldn't I go back with her?" she thought. "I will call to her to come with me."

She took up the flask of curiously-wrought silver which held the sherbet she had made, and throwing a large pale blue shawl over her head, she went out into the corridor. When she reached the staircase door at the end of it, she passed out on to the top-landing and clapped her hands

energetically. There were no bells in the palace, and the clapping of hands was generally such an effectual summons that the need of them was not felt ; but for once the slaves did not hear,—either they were chattering more loudly than usual, or the high wind in the trees drowned the sound.

Valda clapped in vain. It was very draughty on the wide stone stairs, and she was afraid of lingering there. She went on to the door of the *selâmlek*, hastily resolving to go through by herself ; yet she hesitated before she opened it. She had never been into that abode of men without a companion before, and she was rather afraid of venturing. Then she told herself that she had never yet seen a creature whenever she had been through, except Môuheddin Bey, and him only once when the Pâsha had been with her. The corridor was always empty and deserted, and it was most unlikely that she should happen to meet any one in the few seconds that it would take her to run through it.

“ Bah ! Why should I be afraid ? ” she thought. “ I have got my shawl, and if I do meet poor old Môuheddin, he will only run like a hare.”

She unlocked the door, and glanced in. It smelt close and unaired, as it always did, but there was not a sign of anybody to be seen. “ Piff ! ” said Valda, and she went in.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

HENRY FITZROY was a true Briton in one respect. He thought that the English language was immeasurably superior to any other tongue that was spoken upon earth ; and at the bottom of his heart was a deeply-rooted conviction that any one who could not speak it was sunk in depths of deplorable, if not contemptible, ignorance.

But he differed from the average Englishman in possessing a considerable aptitude for picking up foreign languages himself. Able not only to read and understand French, German, and Italian, he could also express himself in them with very fair fluency ; and it was to his proficiency in this respect that he owed his high post in the Khedivial court, and many other advantages that had accrued to him in the course of his career. But never in all his experience had he felt so much inclined to congratulate himself upon his linguistic attainments as on that day in the *harîm*, when a smattering of Turkish enabled him to make out what steps would be requisite for the attainment of the object for which he was there.

He had effected his entrance into those sacred precincts by very simple means. An acquaintance with the managing electrician, and a brief holiday from his duties at the court while the Khedive was on a visit to his palace of Ras-el-Tin at Alexandria, had been his opportunities, and he had known how to turn them to account. He knew something of electricity and mechanics, and he had trusted to chance to afford him the meeting that he so ardently desired ; but he had entered upon the adventure without the least notion how he was going to carry it out, and he had been for some days in the palace in his workman’s disguise without getting any nearer to his object. Once, in the distance, he had caught sight of a slight figure in sweeping rose-coloured draperies whose graceful movements had caused his heart to beat fast ; he thought it might be Valda, but all the ladies had their heads very carefully covered up in shawls, or thick veils, and the fleeting glimpse that he got was only enough to give rise to tantalising conjectures.

From the chance remarks made by

the slaves in his hearing, however, he learnt something certain. Valda Hâinem, when she came to this part of the palace, was accustomed to pass through the corridor of the *selâmlek*, and she came unattended. There then he must take up his post, if possible alone ; and if he could see her close it would be strange if he could not contrive to find some means of making her aware of his identity.

The moment that he had finished the piece of work he was engaged upon, he suggested to the superintendent that perhaps he had better get things ready in the *selâmlek* for the workmen who were to go there next day ; and here fortune played into his hands. With all his natural gifts, and with all the pains that he had taken to pick up some knowledge of his assumed trade, he was still an unskilled workman, and the superintendent, who was not in his secret, was disgusted by his blunders.

"I want this job finished first," he said roughly ; "but you are hindering rather than helping. Go to the *selâmlek* by all means ; you can carry the wires there, and you can take the glasses down and clean them. That is the only sort of work that you are really fit for, it seems to me."

Fitzroy seemed to take his snub in a submissive spirit ; but he went off full of inward elation. The big Soudanese showed him the way through the passages, and unlocked the door for him, but he did not favour him with his company for long. So soon as Fitzroy had settled down to the tedious task of cleaning the lustre-glasses, Manetinna, whose vigilance was required in more important places than the *selâmlek*, announced that he should lock him in for a time, and come back to release him when his task was done.

"How long will you be ?" enquired the fellow in Arabic ; "an hour ?"

"Oh, much longer," replied Fitzroy quickly. "Two hours, three ; it will be a long job, it will take me until it is dark."

Manetinna grinned sardonically, and shrugged his shoulders with an expression of lordly compassion as he looked at this poor devil of a Christian who was compelled to earn his livelihood by manual labour. He himself wore a frock-coat of the finest black broad cloth over a petticoat of spotless white linen, which descended almost to the ankles of his elastic-sided patent-leather boots ; he wore a handsome gold signet ring on the little finger of his broad black hand, and a heavy gold watch and chain, while gold studs and sleeve-links adorned his shining shirt front and cuffs. Manetinna was, in his own estimation, a very grand person indeed, and he dressed in accordance with his position. He treated the workmen under his surveillance with a condescending good-nature that was only tempered with severity when a female form came by ; and with this workman who seemed to know a few words of Arabic, he would have stopped to converse if he had received any encouragement, but Fitzroy was careful not to give it. He had his own reasons for wishing to be alone, and he heard Manetinna depart and turn the key in the lock behind him with feelings of unmitigated satisfaction.

Fitzroy was alone in the great empty vestibule, and the doors at either end of it (the one communicating with the *harîm*, the other with the *selâmlek*,) were securely locked. He could not let himself out, or do anything that would further his object ; but there was just the chance that Valda might happen to pass through while he was there, and his heart beat high with anticipation.

"Of course some slave will be with

her, or else that horrid English girl," he reflected; "I would rather have any one but her, for I know that I may count upon her to do her best to circumvent me. Never mind, I think I can be a match for her, if I can only get speech of the lady."

He left the glass ornaments in a heap on the floor, and began to pace restlessly up and down. It was a gray sunless day, and in the untempered light that came from the six long windows looking into the courtyard the great empty place, with its bare floor and uncovered walls of white and gold, looked indescribably forlorn and desolate. Here and there, on a level with the eye, were pencilled scribblings in Arabic characters that the idle attendants of some by-gone *levé* had left for a record of their littleness, and Fitzroy stopped in his walk to try to decipher them. They were not interesting; except for the picturesqueness of the characters they differed in nothing from the effusions of the ordinary cockney tourist, and Fitzroy was soon weary of this occupation. As the afternoon wore on, he began to find the time interminably long, till at last he took to cleaning his glasses vigorously in order to find some distraction from his thoughts. Once or twice, hearing the sound of footsteps and voices echoing on the *selâmlek* side, he started up in eager expectation; but they were men's voices, and men's heavy footsteps passing from the outer staircase to their rooms in the *selâmlek*, and no one came round the corner as far as the door leading into the empty wing.

Fitzroy finished one set of glasses, and began on another; but by this time the afternoon had begun to close in, and his hopes were sinking into despondency. She was not coming, no doubt she would not come until the dinner-hour, which would not be until after he had left the palace. What a

fool he had been to suppose that he could possibly break down the barriers that hemmed her round on every side; he had better not have come; it was a useless risk to have incurred. He lingered in the embrasure of a great oriel window jutting out to the west, and looked out over the wide court beneath to the horizon, where the sun, breaking through the clouds that had obscured it all day, was setting in glory behind the amethystine hills of the desert. He had almost made up his mind to give up the quest, and leave the palace not to return, when he heard a sound that made him turn round with a start.

Valda's light footsteps had been inaudible on the strip of carpet in the corridor of the *selâmlek*, but when she reached the door she had some difficulty in unlocking it, and the key grated loudly as it turned in the lock. Fitzroy waited in breathless suspense till the door opened and Valda came in. He could see her perfectly as she paused to lock the door after her, and he was struck by the resemblance to a beautiful picture of the Madonna that he had somewhere seen. She was dressed in her loose, flowing morning-gown of rose-coloured flannel, and a beam of the setting sun fell full on her gold-brown hair. The blue shawl that she had thrown about her head had slipped down to her shoulders in her struggles with the key, and in the jealous security of the vestibule she did not trouble to replace it. She did not perceive the blue-smocked workman in the recess of the window, and she was advancing quietly along the middle of the hall when he came forward and placed himself in her way.

"Permit me, Madame, to restore to you this jewel," he said in rapid, well-chosen French. "I was resolved that I would give it back to you with my own hand, and now I have found the

opportunity. You may not remember me, but you will recognise your own diamonds."

She did remember him; she recognised him in an instant, and he saw that she did. The light was full in his face, and on the star that flashed in his hand, and she stood looking at him with a wide, bewildered gaze. She made no attempt to cover her head or turn away; she did not shriek or start; she stood without voice or movement, as if petrified by some overwhelming emotion. Then all at once, she gave a strange little cry, and, covering her face with her hands, sank in a heap on the ground at Fitzroy's feet. The last ray of the setting sun shone in upon them,—on Fitzroy, in his blue workman's suit, standing as if stunned with surprise, on Valda's bowed figure crouching half hidden in her draperies, on the splendid star of flashing diamonds, and on the squalid scrawls that vulgarised the bare white wall behind.

Fitzroy was frightened, as much by the violence of the emotions of his own heart as by the spectacle of the figure at his feet. Valda's nerveless fingers had refused to hold the star that he had placed in her hand, and it had fallen on to the floor, where it lay sparkling in the dust. What had he done? What was to be the consequence of his rash act? He dared not speak, he dared not move, and least of all did he feel as if he dared stretch out a hand to raise up that prostrate figure.

It was Valda who moved first. She stirred a little, and he involuntarily stooped to help her as she stumbled to her feet; but she recoiled from his hand.

"Oh, Monsieur," she gasped, leaning against the wall for support, "you ought never to have come into this house! How did you get in?"

"I wanted to see you, Madame.

Forgive me for causing you such a shock; I never meant to do that, but I have been trying to see you for weeks, and I could not find the chance, till this one offered. I understand something of mechanics, and I asked a friend who is concerned in this contract to let me in as a workman——"

"A friend? Ah, *mon Dieu!* You have someone else in the secret, you have spoken about it to your friends?" Valda's eyes were wide with alarm, and she locked her hands with a gesture of despair.

"Not to a single soul, not one word about you. I merely said to my friend that I had a desire to visit the interior of a *harim* before returning to England, and as I shall be leaving soon, he made no difficulty about gratifying my whim."

"You are leaving this country, Monsieur?" said Valda hurriedly.

"Yes, I am leaving, and I am not coming back. I am recalled to England by family matters which will probably keep me there, and I am obliged to give up my appointment here. In a month's time I shall be gone, but before I left I felt that I must see you once again. I hope that I have not done wrong? I saw that your English friend was opposed to it, but I think that she does not like me. She is prejudiced against me; but I thought that perhaps you, —I hope that I have not been so unfortunate as to offend you, Madame?"

"No," said Valda faintly, "you have not offended me; but oh, Monsieur, I fear that you have done wrong in seeking this interview. You have certainly done a very dangerous thing, and I am doing wrong in staying to speak with you. Yet I cannot forget that I am a mother, and that it is you who have saved for me the life of my child; my little Djemâl-ed-Din is my only one, and if I lost him

I should have nothing on earth to make me care to live. I should be an ungrateful woman if I were not glad to see you, and glad to be able to thank you for myself. I thank you, Monsieur, from my heart, and you may believe me that you will always be remembered by me."

Her beautiful eyes were raised to his face, and the expression in them, which said so much more than her words, stirred him more fiercely than all that had gone before. She was not angry with him ; on the contrary, there was a confession in her eyes that seemed to mean,—what did that pleading look mean ? He had to make a great effort to restrain the impulse to seize and press to his lips the white hand that she held out to him.

"Do not thank me," he said hastily ; "it was a little thing that I did, and for you I would have done much more. If you will only forgive me for the fright I gave you just now ! I know I ought not to have done it, but I was desperate. You cannot know what it is to me to see you again, and to hear you speak so kindly. Ever since that afternoon, when first I saw you, I have thought only of you. Your face has been continually before my eyes like the mirage of a reality which it is a matter of life and death to reach. I have looked for you everywhere, but I could never see you nor come near you."

Valda looked at him as if she could not take her eyes away, and she listened as if under some sort of fascination. "I have seen you," she said almost involuntarily, "I have seen you often."

"You have !" exclaimed Fitzroy eagerly. "Where ? Tell me where ?"

Valda was recovering from the shock of surprise and fear, and the self-possession and presence of mind that seldom failed her in an emergency

were returning to her aid. She was about to reply, when she was startled afresh by the sound of footsteps in the *selâmlek*, and she remembered the peril of the position. "Someone is coming !" she said in a hurried whisper. "I must go !"

But the footsteps were not coming from the direction of the *harîm*; they came from the corridor round the corner, and died away down the outside staircase.

"It is only one of the men going out of the *selâmlek*," said Fitzroy reassuringly. "Ah, do not hurry away ; I may never be able to see you again."

"That is true," said Valda with a sigh ; "but the risk is too terrible. For myself I am not afraid ; no one can do me any harm ; but for you,—your life would not be safe if this became known. If one of the negroes were to come in and see you !"

"The doors are safely locked," said Fitzroy, "and the man who has the keys is not likely to come for a good half-hour yet. But if anybody should come, we should hear him approaching, and you would have time to slip out at the other end."

"The head negro has got the Pâsha's keys," said Valda : "he must have borrowed them in order to be able to let you in ; but if mine were in the lock on this side he would not be able to get his in. Then, while he was fumbling and trying to find out what the obstruction was, I should have time to get away."

She said this more in contemplation of a possibility than in suggestion of a plan, but Fitzroy saw at once that the idea, though simple, was a brilliant one, and he hastened to carry it into effect. He took the keys from Valda's hand, and made both doors secure. When he came back, he picked up the diamond ornament which Valda had left lying on the floor, and

followed her into the bay of the oriel with it.

"No, no, Monsieur," she said as he offered it to her, "I do not wish to have it back. Did not Mademoiselle tell you? My little boy gave it to you, and I should like you to keep it. Will you not accept it, Monsieur, from him and from me, to remind you sometimes of us? The brooch is nothing; but I should like to think that when you are far away you will have something that will prevent you from forgetting us altogether."

"I shall never forget you,—there is no danger of that!" said Fitzroy, with sudden passion. "I need no *souvenir* to make me remember you; still, if you would give me something,—a glove or a ribbon,—something that you have worn or used, I should treasure it as my most valued possession. Your diamonds I cannot accept. Miss Grey did tell me of your generous intention; but I told her that it was impossible for me to take advantage of it. No, Madame, do not think that you owe me any debt that needs to be repaid by money or diamonds. The thanks that you have given me are enough; they are more than enough, and I shall never cease to bless the fortunate chance that made me the person to earn them."

Valda saw that he was determined not to take the jewel, and she did not urge him further. Her wistful gaze fell from his face to the folds of her blue shawl, which she had again drawn round her head, and she mechanically tried to pass the long pin of the ornament in and out of the meshes.

"Will you not tell me where it is that you have seen me?" Fitzroy asked, as she did not speak. "Is it possible that you felt enough interest,—did you take the trouble to look out for me?"

Valda raised her eyes for an in-

stant, and the mounting colour in her cheek told its own tale. "I have seen you when I have been out driving," she answered, "at Ghesireh, at Giseh, and in the town,—but oftenest at the theatre. Every night, when you have been there, I have seen you from my box."

"You have been to the theatre? You are in the habit of going there?" he exclaimed in surprise. "Oh, to the covered boxes, of course; I never thought of that."

"No, you never looked up to that side: I have noticed; but you look very often to the other side, and you go to visit the ladies in their boxes. I think there are several charming young European ladies in whom you are interested."

Fitzroy smiled, enchanted by this little touch of the eternal feminine. "Do you think so?" he said. "Well, would you like to know what I think of them in comparison to you?"

"No, no, no, oh no! Do not mistake me; it makes no difference to me what you think,—of them, of me, of anybody. Do you not see? You are standing close to me, and yet you are very far away. There is a deep, deep gulf between us, and it can never be crossed. I see it clearly, but I will not look across; it is better not to do it."

She stretched out her hands as she spoke with an intensely dramatic gesture that seemed to keep him off at arm's length; but there were tears in her eyes, and she drew back a pace or two into the recess of the window, and turned her face away in order to hide them. Fitzroy did not speak or move; he stood as if under an interdict, and Valda stared through her tears at the rosy lights in the west. The sun had sunk behind the hills, but the colours in the sky were growing more glorious every instant, and the graceful minaret of a little white

mosque close by, and the still more graceful palm-tree that grew near it, stood out against the pink and golden distance and the opaline reaches of the Nile. It was the same sunset scene that Valda had looked upon with Margaret Grey, when she had said that there was no romance, nor any possibility of it in her life. How short a time ago she had said that, and now she could never say it again! The unexpected, the impossible, had happened; it had come to her, the romance of her life, and she lingered, knowing only too well how soon it would be over.

"Ah, Madame," said Fitzroy, breaking the silence suddenly as he became aware of her emotion, "there are some lines in English that I believe in,—

Stone walls do not a prison make,  
Nor iron bars a cage.

Tell me, which is the box that you occupy when you go to the theatre?"

"It is the third from the stage, the one next to the two which are reserved for the Vice-reine," said Valda, turning towards him. "But why do you wish to know? Through that thickness of iron you can see nothing."

"No, yet I like to know where you are. And you are there every night that there is a performance?"

"Most nights, but there are not many left now," she said with a sigh. "The season comes to an end in a week's time, and then comes Râma-zân, when one sees nothing more of Europeans."

"There will be a grand masquerade night at the opera at the end of the season; shall you be there?"

"I don't know. Perhaps the box will have to be especially engaged for that, and I do not know if the Pâsha will be willing. He does not like my

going to the theatre, and he will be glad when it comes to an end."

It was the first time that the Pâsha's name had come up between them, and Fitzroy's brows darkened at the thought of him. He had no more acquaintance with the domestic life of a Turkish Pâsha than the vague impressions that remained to him from his boyish readings of *THE ARABIAN NIGHTS*, and his imagination conjured up a picture strangely distorted from the truth,—a beautiful helpless woman made the slave and toy of a sensual tyrant whose jealousy grudged her even the few simple pleasures that her prison-life allowed.

"Tell me," he said abruptly; "is he unkind to you? Does he make you unhappy?"

"Who,—the Pâsha?" asked Valda with widely opened eyes. "Oh no, no, indeed! He is very good to me; he does everything in his power to make me happy."

"But you are not happy,—you do not love him?"

It was a question that Fitzroy had no right to ask, and Valda would have done well to be angry with him; but she was looking at him as he spoke, and she saw a look in his eyes that shook her to the soul. The words had escaped from him involuntarily, and they betrayed the passionate rebellion of his love. She stood for a moment breathless and speechless, almost overpowered by the realisation of the intensity of the passion that encompassed her; her beautiful face quivered and flushed, but her eyes did not fall, and in their wonderful depths, as she gazed silently into his, were revealed the purity and loyalty of her heart.

"My husband is a good man," she said firmly, "and if I am not happy it is my fault, not his. He loves me, and he has not deserved that I should deceive him. I will not do it, and

this is the last time that you must see me ; we must never meet again."

It was an impregnable position ; Fitzroy saw that, and yet he would not give in. A sentence so inexorable he felt he could not accept.

" Ah Monsieur," Valda cried as she felt the significance of his silence, "you must not seek to see me ! For your own sake I implore you. It might bring trouble on me, but the danger to you would be far greater. Already you have run a terrible risk in coming to this house in a disguise ; I cannot endure to think what might happen if you were found out. You must never do such a thing again ; promise me that you will not ! "

Fitzroy did not answer ; but in the iron determination of his face and the desperation of his eyes as they seemed to devour her features, she read the strength of the feeling she had to oppose. He had said very little, the questions he had asked had been almost matter of fact ; he had made no passionate appeals or protestations like the heroes she had seen at the theatre ; he was as impulsive and self-contained as the best-bred Osmanli. Englishmen were like that, no doubt ; but the strength of character indicated by his reserve made Valda tremble the more. " I beg of you, I implore you ! " she said desperately. " Oh Monsieur, if you will not desist for your own sake, for mine you must. It would kill me if anything were to happen to you on my account."

" If you tell me that, if you tell me that you care for me," said Fitzroy quickly, " I will dare anything, venture anything ; there is no obstacle that I should not know how to overcome. Oh Valda, do you indeed care for me ? "

He tried to take her hand, but she snatched it away, and to his astonishment and consternation, she caught

hold of his in both of hers, and pressed it to her lips. Her kisses and her tears rained down upon his hand together, and Fitzroy, thrilled to the heart by the shock of it, lost the last vestige of self-control that remained to him. " Valda, Valda," he cried passionately, " you are my love, my queen, the only woman I ever loved, —come to me ! "

He would have caught her into his arms, but she drew herself away. " No, Monsieur, my love is not so selfish as that. God forgive me for the wrong I have done already,—worse I will not do. Now I leave you, and may Allah protect and defend you, for my love cannot. Adieu ! "

" Valda, Valda ! Don't leave me like this, without any hope to look forward to,—you must not,—you shall not ! " cried Fitzroy ; but Valda had flown away from him, and was already half-way down the corridor towards the *harim* door. He dared not pursue her, but when he saw her stop short, and raise her hand with a gesture of alarm, he hastened to her side.

Heavy footsteps could be plainly heard coming along the corridor of the *selāmlek*. " It is Manetinna, the head negro," said Valda in a rapid whisper. " I know his step, and he will be here in an instant ; but do not open to him until I am safely out at the other end, and you have heard me lock the door. Tell him that you found the key upon the floor, and tried to see if it would fit. I can speak about it afterwards, and say that I think I must have dropped it this morning."

Valda gave these brief directions in a few seconds, and then flew swiftly and noiselessly along the carpet to the other end of the hall. By the time that the negro had got to the first door, she had reached the

further one, and the noise she made in turning the lock was unheard by Manetinna as he fumbled over the difficulties that his key encountered.

Fitzroy remained in his place in the middle of the hall, until he heard the sound of Valda's key being withdrawn from the lock; but by that time the negro had discovered that something was wrong, and he was beginning to curse volubly in Arabic.

"What is the meaning of this? What evil deed have you been hatching, dog of an unbeliever?" he burst out furiously, as soon as Fitzroy let him in. "A key,—you have got a key! Where did you get it from?"

"I picked it up from the floor," replied Fitzroy, reflecting that the explanation suggested by Valda, though delusive, had the merit of being true so far as it went. "I put it in the door to try if it would fit. There was no harm in that."

"Yes, but why did you leave it locked? Answer me that, you dog!" replied the slave, his suspicions only half appeased.

"Let me advise you to wag your tongue a little more civilly in speaking to honest workmen," said Fitzroy coolly. "Of course I locked the door to secure myself against the entrance of any of the ladies of the *harim* who might happen to be prying about. Those Circassian slaves of yours have been running after me all day long, and I have no desire to get into trouble on their account."

Manetinna grunted. He was by no means taken in by this explanation, but the unblushing effrontery of it staggered him for a moment, and then he reflected that if there had been any mischief afoot, it would hardly be to his interest to bring it to light. For whatever had happened he would be held accountable, and whether he were really to blame or not, he would be made the scape-goat.

He passed over the matter without further demonstration therefore, and contented himself with a satirical comment upon the amount of work that the unbeliever had contrived to get through in the course of the afternoon. "By the beard of the Prophet, thou art an honest man. Wallahi! Haste is of the Devil,—so it is written—but thine is a neck to be beaten with shoes. When thy master cometh in the morning to see what thou hast accomplished, may I be there to witness thy reward. Go, and may God speed thee on thy way to Gehannum!"

With this doubtful benediction, the negro conducted his charge to the great gloomy hall in the basement of the palace, where the other workmen were already collected, shouldering their tools, and making ready for departure. Fitzroy went out with the rest of the blue smocks; but when they returned in the morning, he was no longer in their ranks. The pious aspirations of Manetinna were not destined to be gratified.

#### CHAPTER XV.

VALDA was careful not to give Margaret the slightest hint of her interview with Captain Fitzroy; but her manner and the evident excitement under which she was labouring convinced the English girl that something fresh had happened, and a chance discovery soon confirmed her suspicions.

One evening Margaret had occasion to go to the little cabinet in which Valda kept her jewels and knick-knacks. Djemâl-ed-Din had been even more difficult to manage than usual, and before going to sleep had clamoured so persistently for sweets that Margaret, to pacify him, promised to go and look for some in his mother's room. Valda (who as

usual was at the theatre with Hamida) was accustomed to keep a little store of Turkish Delight and other sweets for the boy's benefit, and Margaret went to the porcelain vase in which she knew that she would find some.

She stood under the electric light in Valda's bedroom before the open doors of the cabinet, and on the shelf before her eyes was the vase that she wanted ; but it was not this that she saw first. On another shelf were the jewels that Valda was accustomed to wear every day, and among them was the diamond star that had been lost at Ghesîreh. Margaret, who recognised it at once, stood aghast at the sight. How had it come there ? Captain Fitzroy had declared his intention of restoring the jewel with his own hand ; had he managed to do so ? Had he seen her again, or had he sent it ? Margaret ran over in her mind every possible contingency, but of course she did not think of the right one, and the conclusion that she came to was that Hamida Hânen might have had something to do with it. Margaret, even more than the Pâsha, disliked and dreaded Valda's intimacy with Hamida, and she had all along been afraid of the increased influence that was the inevitable result of those frequent evenings at the theatre. Valda would sooner or later confide her secret to Hamida, if she had not done so already ; of that Margaret felt certain, and with that hand in the business, what might not come of it ? This new discovery made Margaret more uneasy than ever, and she longed to put the Pâsha on his guard ; yet there was nothing definite to go upon, and remembering how solemnly Valda had warned her of the consequences of any such communication, she was withheld by a dread of precipitating a catastrophe. Valda must know him better than

she could, and if it had been a difficult story to tell at first it would be worse now ; how much worse Margaret did not know. She resolved, then, to say nothing to the Pâsha, and to take the earliest opportunity of speaking to Valda herself. Something must be done to prevent her from being left to the guidance of Hamida in what might be the most critical moment of her life.

The next morning she found her opportunity. Valda, in the pink morning-gown that every day seemed to accentuate the waxen whiteness of her complexion, came out at about ten o'clock into the sunny garden, and with a languid smile of greeting to Margaret, sank down by her side on the cushions by the orange-trees.

"*Bon jour, Madame,*" said Margaret cheerfully. "Did you enjoy yourself at the theatre last night ; was it a good play ?"

"Oh, I don't know. It was opera, and I never care for that much ; perhaps you, who understand the music, would have liked it. I am so sorry not to be able to take you oftener, Mademoiselle. It seems a shame,—but my poor little Djemâl-ed-Din—how can I leave him to the slaves who manage him so badly ? Was he good last night ?"

"Fairly," said Margaret. "He wanted some sweets, and the slaves told him that there were none, because they did not like to go and look in your cabinet ; and then he cried a good deal."

"Lazy creatures !" exclaimed Valda with indignation. "Why could they not go and look ?"

"Well, I saw that they were speaking without knowing, and Djemâl-ed-Din did not believe them ; so I went myself and brought him some, and after that he went to sleep quite happily."

"You did right, Mademoiselle, quite

right. That is what is such a comfort to me; when you are there, I know that my poor little one will not be thwarted and made unhappy unnecessarily."

"But Hänem, when I was looking in the cabinet for the sweets, I saw what surprised me greatly; I saw the diamond star that you lost at Ghesireh. It caught my eye among the other jewels, and I could not mistake it. How have you got it back?"

Valda did not start, or show any signs of confusion when Margaret mentioned her discovery; but the colour stole slowly back into her cheeks as she turned and looked at her. "Yes," she said calmly, "I have got my star back."

"But how? Who brought it you? Oh Valda, have you seen Captain Fitzroy?"

Valda looked away among the shrubberies with a strange smile on her face. "I have seen him often," she said with composure. "I see him sometimes when I go out driving, and sometimes at the theatre, and in imagination I see him always."

"But you have not met him, you have not seen him to speak to? Surely it was not he himself who gave you back the jewel?"

Margaret spoke with desperate earnestness, and the anxiety in her voice and face was so manifest as to take away all suspicion of impertinence from the question. Valda repressed an impulse to snub her, and the denial that rose next to her lips became impossible under the sweet and loving gaze of the gray eyes so anxiously fixed upon her.

"Yes," she said slowly, "I have seen and spoken with him, and it was he who gave me back my star; but do not ask how it happened, or where. It is enough that it is all over, and that it will never happen again. Once, once in my life, I have known what

makes it worth while to have lived; but it will never come again. Oh, dear Mademoiselle, you may well pity me. Indeed I am very unhappy!" Her tears fell fast as she reached out her hand to Margaret, and felt it taken in a warm and sympathetic clasp; and Margaret had tears in her eyes too, but she had no comfort to give. "You have known what it is, I am sure, Mademoiselle," said Valda between her sobs; "you also have been parted by a cruel fate from some one whom you loved and who loved you."

"No," said Margaret honestly, "I have had no experience of that kind. Nobody whom I could care for has ever cared for me in that sort of way."

"Oh Mademoiselle, is that possible? You, who are so good and charming, so amiable and sympathetic! The Pâsha thinks there is no one like you, and you have travelled about so much, and must have met so many nice men, —how can it be?"

"I don't know," said Margaret with a frankness that it was impossible to doubt. "That sort of thing has never come my way, and I don't suppose it ever will. There are a great many women among us in these days who miss the lot that they were meant for, who must miss it; and perhaps our freedom is not really so desirable as it seems to you. But never mind about me. If only this misfortune had not happened to you!"

Valda dried her eyes quickly, and looked at her companion with a sudden change of expression. It was a misfortune certainly that had happened to her, and yet,—would she have wished to have gone without it? She felt that she would not; but she said nothing, for she realised that Margaret, sympathetic though she was, could not understand her feeling. "It was not my fault that it happened," she said

gently ; "and this last meeting was not my doing or my seeking either. It came upon me by surprise, and without my consent ; I should like you to know that, Mademoiselle."

"I am sure that you would never lend yourself to any sort of scheme or intrigue," said Margaret warmly. "It is Captain Fitzroy's designs that I am afraid of. He has not many scruples, I am convinced."

"Indeed, Mademoiselle, you misjudge him," said Valda earnestly. "He does not mean evil ; I am sure of it, I can read his face. He liked me, and he wished to see me again ; that was only natural, when he did not realise the danger of it."

"But he has been two years in Egypt, and he ought to know. Besides I told him."

"He considers that you are prejudiced against him ; he thought so that day, and he was angry with you. That only made him more determined ; but now he has seen me, and he has given me back the jewel. He would give it back, though I wished him to keep it, and it is all over. I told him that he must never see me again."

"And do you think that he will not try ?"

"I don't know,—I hope not," said Valda faintly.

"He is a dangerous man," said Margaret. "He may mean no harm, but he is infatuated and reckless, and he will stop at nothing to gain his own way."

"Oh, Mademoiselle, you are prejudiced against him indeed ! I am convinced that he has a good character. He is not only good, he is noble. He resembles the chevalier of the story of the Knights and the Saracens you told me once ; he is a perfect gentleman."

Margaret was silent. To her Captain Fitzroy seemed a very poor sort of paladin, and in her own mind she

compared him unfavourably with the Paynim Pâsha whose rival he was ; but she knew that argument was useless.

"You don't know of anything against him, Mademoiselle ?" Valda said suddenly.

"No ; I know nothing about him. I am only judging him by his conduct in this matter ; but that is enough to make me distrust him. I am afraid of him, and I am afraid,—oh, Valda, it was not through Hamîda Hânem that you met him ?"

"No ; she had nothing to do with it. He contrived it entirely himself, without help from me or any of my friends."

"Then does Hamîda know nothing about it ?" Margaret asked eagerly ; but her heart sank as she saw Valda's face.

"Yes ; she knows. How could she help it, when she went out so much with me ? She noticed that I was always looking out for him, and she found out. Then she questioned me."

"And did you tell her everything ? Oh, not that last meeting,—you surely did not tell her about that ?"

"I could not help it, Mademoiselle. I was in such a state of mind that evening, I was nearly mad. And Hamîda is very shrewd ; if I had not told her, she would have guessed. Perhaps she might even have imagined that it was something worse than the truth."

"I do not trust Hamîda Hânem," said Margaret. "She would not be a good person to advise you in a difficulty. Remember that her principles are very different from yours."

"They are indeed !" said Valda. "She was not in the least shocked or surprised at the story I told her. She seemed to think it an amusing joke, and she said that it did not matter at all so long as the Pâsha did not get to hear of it ; that, she ad-

mitted, would really be a serious thing. But do not distress yourself, Mademoiselle; there is not much time left for any mischief to happen in. He is going away from Egypt."

"Who? Captain Fitzroy? He is leaving Egypt?"

"Yes," answered Valda, her eyes filling with tears. "He told me that he was returning to England, and that he was never coming back any more. Before the end of Ramazân he will be gone. Ah, Mademoiselle, you will be glad, but I——"

Valda broke down altogether at this point, and fearful lest her agitation should betray her to the slave who was looking after the little boy close by, she rose up and went quickly into the house. Margaret could scarcely have disguised the relief and satisfaction that the news of Captain Fitzroy's approaching departure afforded her, and she was thankful to be left to herself to think it over. This news was the one gleam of hope and comfort left to her, but it was not enough to reassure her. It was clear that Valda had been able to gain no promise from Fitzroy that he would not attempt to see her again, and if he was going away soon, the shortness of time would only make him the more desperate and determined. Margaret thought over the matter all day, and she came to the conclusion that it was her duty to interpose. "He does not know what he is doing," she thought; "he does not realise the danger and cruelty of it, and it is necessary that the matter should be put strongly before him. I will make one more attempt to check him, and then at least I shall be able to feel that I have done my best."

In accordance with this resolution Margaret wrote a note to Captain Fitzroy asking him to meet her on the following afternoon in the Esbékiah gardens. She said nothing about it

to Valda, but when Djemâl-ed-Din had been coaxed off to sleep, she mentioned that she was going out into the town, and Valda raised no objection.

The place of meeting was one of the little wooden bridges over the artificial water in the middle of the park, and Margaret was there punctually to her time; but no one else was in sight. At that early hour of the afternoon the heat was intense, and the park was almost deserted. The plants, tropical though many of them were, drooped in the fiery sunshine, and the ground was like hot iron under foot. The air was full of dust, and not even the syringes playing over the grass could make it green.

Margaret waited for nearly half an hour, leaning over the railings of the rustic bridge, and watching the ducks paddling about in the water. She was beginning to think that her appeal had been made in vain, when, looking up, she saw Captain Fitzroy's tall figure coming across the grass towards her. Her heart beat fast as she watched his approach, and she made a desperate resolution to be conciliatory and tactful, and to manage better than she had done before; but she thought, as he came up, that he looked alarmingly stiff and uncompromising, and his face did not relax into a smile as he returned her nervous greeting.

"You asked me to meet you here?" he said abruptly. "Have you a message from the Lady Valda?"

"No," said Margaret; "it was without her knowledge that I wrote to you; she does not know that I am here."

"Oh, really," said Fitzroy quietly, and his eyebrows went up with a slightly supercilious lift that gave his face a very different expression from any that Valda had ever seen upon it. "Then what is it you can have to say to me?"

"I want to tell you something about the lady, something that I am sure you do not realise. Captain Fitzroy, please do not think me spiteful and intrusive; it is only because I care so much for Valda that I am so anxious upon her account. I cannot bear to see her life spoilt, and I am sure that if you knew the circumstances as I do, you would be willing to make any sacrifice rather than be the cause of it." Margaret paused, but Fitzroy made no remark to help her. He stood stiff and straight, listening politely but with an impassive face, and she went on desperately. "Valda tells me that you are going away soon. Is that true?"

For an instant Fitzroy looked disturbed. "She told you that? Has she told you—" he broke off suddenly, but Margaret could supply the hiatus.

"She has told me of her last meeting with you. I saw the star, and she said that you had returned it to her yourself. She hopes now that it is all over, and that there is no fear that you will compromise her further."

"She hopes that—ah, I see! That is your interpretation, Miss Grey. Of course you see things from your point of view; but if I am not much mistaken, it is a different one from Valda's, and I think that I may safely make some reservations in accepting your statements."

He stood and looked at her with undisguised hostility. There was between them that silent antagonism which sometimes forms such a hopeless gulf between natures of contrasting qualities and destinies, a feeling of contempt and repulsion on both sides that there is no repressing. Margaret had no envy or bitterness in her composition; she was too genuinely humble-minded and unself-

ish to feel any resentment at the inequalities of life; but there was something in Captain Fitzroy, in the pride of his splendid physique and assured position, which irritated her; and despising him, as she did, for the want of any stern stuff in his character to work upon, she could hardly endure the thinly-veiled expression of his contempt. She had qualities that he was incapable of comprehending, and she was perhaps equally unable to appreciate the good points of his character.

"Is it true that you are going to leave Egypt soon?" she asked, making a valiant effort to put her own feelings aside, and to think only of Valda's interests.

"Yes," he replied; "I expect I shall be leaving in less than a month now."

"Then there is a chance left for Valda. When you are gone she may be able to get over this, and settle down again, though I suppose she can never be as happy again as she has been. Captain Fitzroy, this is what I wanted to tell you,—Valda's health is being destroyed. You may take my statement with what reservations you choose; I shall at least have done my duty in putting the truth before you. She is ill; her health and happiness are both breaking down under this strain. If it goes on, it will end in a tragedy of some sort, and the responsibility of it will lie at your door."

"She is ill,—her health is breaking down,—what do you mean?" demanded Fitzroy, now thoroughly startled.

"I will tell you everything; I think you ought to know," said Margaret firmly. "Valda is not like an English girl; her passionate Eastern nature is not one to be lightly played with. Before you came she was not happy, but she was not unhappy either,—at least she

knew no cause why she should be. She was fond of her husband in her own way, and he was devoted to her. She had her child, whom she adored, and no lack of occupation and amusement to fill up her daily life. There was only the natural melancholy of her disposition to throw any cloud over the peaceful tranquillity of her existence. Then came that accident that threw you in her way."

"Yes,—then?" said Fitzroy intently, as Margaret paused.

"That was the beginning of mischief. The circumstances were extraordinary; you saved her little boy's life, and you saw her, and looked at her, as no man save her husband had ever looked at her before. It was not wonderful that it should have made a deep impression upon her. Still that might have faded,—she might have forgotten it if nothing had occurred to renew it,—but you would not suffer that. You insisted that you would see her, and therefore the thought of you was kept continually in her mind. You managed to secure a meeting; what you said or did, I do not know, but since then,—since then,—"

"What have you seen since then?" asked Fitzroy pressingly. His voice shook with some suppressed emotion; what was it? Regret, fear, or was it joy? Margaret wondered as she looked at him, and a pang of misgiving assailed her; was she giving him an assurance that he wanted, was he waiting to learn from her the certainty that Valda loved him?

"Since then she has been miserable," she exclaimed passionately. "If you wanted to make her suffer, you have done it; her worst enemy could not have blighted her life more effectually. She has suffered cruelly, and all her pleasure in life is gone. Her one chance now lies in your speedy departure, and I have come

here to-day to appeal to you not to try to see her again before you go. I implore you to have pity upon her, and to refrain from working further havoc in her happiness."

Fitzroy was silent, but his face was flushed and his eyes shining. He was desperately in love with Valda, and now he heard the confirmation of what he knew already, but had hardly dared to believe, that she loved him also. She loved him, she loved him! What did anything matter in comparison with this great reality? What were the remonstrances of this girl but the commonplace croakings of an envious and narrow mind? He did not heed them, he did not listen to them.

"You mean to see her again,—I know you do," said Margaret, who was watching his face; "and Valda believes it also, though she tries to think that she does not. But I warn you that no good will come of it. You will make her suffer: you may bring discovery upon her and the anger of her husband, who would never forgive her, however innocent she might be; but you will gain nothing. Valda will never forget what she owes to her husband and to her family, and you can only bring to her pain and grief and desolation."

Margaret had made her last appeal, and it was received in silence. She could not guess from Fitzroy's set face how deeply he was stirred, nor how near to yielding he was brought. She thought him detestable; but he was in reality very far from being a detestable character, and his faults lay more in the drawbacks of his qualities than in any inclination to vice. He had a high sense of honour, and his disposition was naturally so generous that at any other time he could not have withheld an appeal to respect a woman's weakness; but now he was in the grip of the fiercest emotion that can take possession of

the heart of man, and years of prosperity and self-indulgence had sapped the strength that might have enabled him to fight against it. He looked at Margaret's pale, refined face with aversion, almost with detestation, and consciously allowing his mind to be diverted from the real point at issue, he decided against her appeal on the ground of the distaste with which she inspired him. She was a little prig, a little middle-class piece of respectability, and she did not know in the least what she was talking about. She had no experience of the world or of society, and was he to be guided by her pragmatical and offensive notions of propriety? He knew now that Valda loved him, and he must see her once again before he left the country. It was a very slender privilege to ask, and it was one that would be denied to no man in any civilised society; he would not relinquish the hope of it to satisfy the prejudices of this meddlesome and intolerable girl.

The sound of a clock striking four somewhere close by reminded Margaret that her time was limited, and seeing that further remonstrance was useless, she drew down her veil, and moved to go. "Good-bye; I see I have done no good," she said miserably; but Fitzroy accompanied her on her way towards the gate of the park.

"I don't know what good you expected to do," he said as he walked beside her; "but you may believe me when I tell you that no ex postulations are necessary to keep me from doing anything to injure the person whom I love best in the world. I know that there is nothing to be gained by it," he went on, allowing some of the strong emotion which he felt to find an outlet; "but I cannot cut myself off from the hope of seeing her once more should the opportunity come in my way. I cannot believe that she would wish to deny me that,

or that it could do her any harm. I promise you, however, that I will do nothing that can expose her to any possible risk."

"Risk! Who that has secret dealings can possibly avoid risk? In a crooked path there are turns and surprises that cannot be reckoned upon, and any moment may bring you face to face with discovery and exposure. I believe—ah!"

Margaret broke off short in the middle of her sentence, as an illustration of the truth that she was trying to express forced itself suddenly upon her. Who would have thought of seeing the Pâsha walking in the Esbékiah gardens at this hour? Yet, as Margaret raised her eyes, she saw him there in his grey tweed suit and crimson fez,—unmistakably the Pâsha! He stood at the turn of the walk, about a hundred paces away, where there was a cross cut through the park, and Margaret stopped short, hoping that he might pass by without looking up the side path along which she and Fitzroy were walking. But the Pâsha's blue eyes were very keen-sighted, and not only did he see her, but he observed the signs of confusion and dismay that were betrayed on her countenance. A gleam of amusement flashed across his face; then in an instant he became grave, and, bowing ceremoniously, shot a keen glance at her companion as he went past.

"Who is that?" enquired Fitzroy quickly, as Margaret stood pale and discomposed, looking after the departing figure of the Pâsha.

"It was the Pâsha," she answered; "yes, her husband. You have not seen him before?"

"Yes, I have seen him. I must have seen him often among the other Pâshas at the *levées*, for I know his face quite well, but I did not know who he was."

"He is the kindest and gentlest of

men, and Turk and Paynim though he is, I am sure there is no husband in Cairo who is more devoted to his wife," said Margaret with a sudden break in her voice. "He worships Valda, and if he knew what is going on, I believe it would break his heart. No, Captain Fitzroy, do not come any further with me. There is nothing to be gained by prolonging this interview, and risks are not so easy to avoid as you seem to imagine."

Margaret had failed in her mission, and she went away with a very bitter consciousness of it. It seemed a pity, but if she had been a less high principled and conscientious person

than she was, she would probably have had a better chance of succeeding. The sense of her superior goodness irritated Fitzroy; it made him feel worse than he naturally was, and he hardened himself in his resolution against her. In his pocket he had a note (not the first that he had received) from Hamida Hânem, offering to arrange a meeting at the masked ball at the Opera House, to which she was going with Valda. He had not yet sent an answer; but as he parted from Margaret, his fingers sought the little piece of paper, and closed vigorously upon it. He was not going to sacrifice this chance.

*(To be continued.)*

## THE INTERIOR OF THE GOLD COAST.

THE traveller who sails down that portion of the Gulf of Guinea which skirts the Gold Coast and gazes shoreward from the ship's deck, looks upon a green and pleasant land with very little in its appearance to suggest tropical Africa, excepting the cocoanut palms that crowd together in groups by the margin of the sea, where a smoking surf booms perennially upon the yellow strand. Whether he has come from the west, where his eyes have been wearied with the monotony of the low-lying Kru Coast, or from the east where the scenery of the Bight of Benin rings never-ending changes on surf and sand and mud-flat, and where the low, palm besprinkled shores of the lagoon country alternate with the unvarying line of sad-coloured mangrove that borders the yellow waters of the creeks, it will be with a pleasant sense of relief that he will gaze upon the smiling uplands and soft, luxuriant woodland of the Gold Coast, its prosperous-looking towns and villages nestling snugly amid the dark-green foliage, the round-topped hills and grassy plains near the sea, and the lofty isolated peaks that loom blue and shadowy far away inland.

For many years, indeed for some centuries, this coast-line was all that was known to Europeans. Rumours did certainly reach the white men occasionally in their forts and castles by the sea, of strange and powerful races in the interior, but these reports were as vague and shadowy as the forms of the distant mountains; and even after men had ceased to think of the inland countries as possibly

containing the mysterious kingdom of Prester John, complete ignorance prevailed as to their geography and the peoples who inhabited them.

The first glimmer of knowledge respecting any of these countries appears in the beginning of the eighteenth century, when the circumstances attending the conquest of Denkira and the rise of the Ashanti nation came to the knowledge of Willem Bosman, as related in his quaint though graphic and accurate letters; but it was not until after the lapse of more than another century that any of them were seen by the eye of a European.

A mission to Ashanti, however, in 1817, of which Bowdich has left so admirable an account, inaugurated, or, as perhaps one should rather say, foreshadowed an advance on the part of the white men into the interior and an extension of their dominion to the countries behind the coast-line.

Another sixty years passed away before the advance was actually made. and even then it was like the advance of one of the great waves that beat upon this shore, rushing forward with irresistible force, sweeping all before them, and then as suddenly retiring. In 1873 the British forces invaded Ashanti, sacked and burned the capital, and then retired, having in a few weeks destroyed a kingdom that had been slowly built up by two centuries of conquest and social integration. For more than twenty years after the Ashanti war, the interior of the Gold Coast remained in the state of chaos to which it had been reduced by the invading force;

then once more the British entered and the native rule was ended. The interior of the Gold Coast, or at least that portion of it which our enterprising French and German neighbours had left unclaimed, was finally absorbed by the Colonial Government, to become, in the future, a part of the Gold Coast Colony.

The great accession of territory that has resulted from this annexation appears to have awakened considerable public expectation as to future commercial development, and it may be found interesting to briefly consider the character of the country and its inhabitants.

To understand correctly the extent, and especially the lateral extent of this territory, it is necessary to take note of two facts: first, that the political boundaries of the Gold Coast do not coincide with the geographical, since they include a portion of the Slave Coast; and next, that the interior does not by any means correspond with the coast-line, since the encroachments of the French, and more especially of the Germans, cause it to taper off inland in a remarkable manner. Contracted, however, as the British interior is by the lateral encroachments and the neutral zone, there yet remains in the territory recently acquired some fifteen to eighteen thousand square miles of country to be developed by the white trader and proprietor.

A considerable part of this region is occupied by Ashanti; indeed the entire area was formerly under the rule of that nation, whose power and influence were felt in parts far more remote. The western border, which separates the British interior from the French, runs through Sehui (or Sefwi) in the south and Jaman in the north; the northern limit corresponds roughly to the eleventh parallel, while the eastern interior has been appro-

priated by the Germans, and the boundary, excepting near the coast, is the river Volta.

Such being the extent and boundaries of the inland countries to the rear of the Gold Coast, we may now proceed to briefly examine their physical characters and commercial capabilities. The simplest, and probably the best, way in which to convey an idea of the characters of a tract of country and its inhabitants is to describe a journey, real or imaginary, through its most representative portions. With a view, therefore, to a proper understanding of this great slice of land which has been acquired at so considerable a cost, we will assume, not the cap of Fortunatus, which is a transport-appliance unsuited to the observer or explorer, but a pair of serviceable boots and a suit of cool kharki, and set out upon our travels, selecting as our route the one which will probably be most used in the future, that from Cape Coast through Prasu and Coomassie to the north.

As we turn out in the morning we shall probably find the town already astir and the streets full of life, for the native is an early bird,—and a late one too, on moonlight nights. Out in the anchorage a steamer looms faintly through the morning haze, her whistle sounding impatiently for the tardy surf-boats, while through the streets strings of Bush natives patter in single file down the middle of the road, bearing on their heads baskets and calabashes piled high with vegetables, fruit, and eggs for the market. In the great white-washed factories life is stirring too, for we hear from behind the wall of the compounds the shrill remonstrance of the immolated fowl (whose cadaverous carcase will appear in sinewy resurrection in the breakfast-curry or "palm-oil chop") and pyjama-clad figures saunter, tea-

cup in hand, upon the shady verandas. Long-eared pariah dogs scratch themselves by the road-side and yap at us in a high, throaty falsetto, and above the Castle the carrion-vultures wheel in endless circles, as motionless and effortless as though suspended by invisible threads. Noting these sights and sounds, familiar enough after a month's residence, we hurry onward, for the sun is mounting fast and we blink as we pass the white-washed walls and over the dazzling quartz that sparkles in the road.

It is not many minutes before we exchange the glare of the town for the more restful colouring of the Bush, and as we reach the crest of the first low ridge, we look out over a wide stretch of dark green through which the bright red path meanders in many a sinuous curve. But here we must not linger, though the scene is pleasant enough to look upon, for we are bound for the far interior.

On we hurry through the high Bush, where the tiny sun-birds flash in the brilliant light in a plumage of green and crimson and burnished gold that would make the rainbow itself look dull and faded; past the fast-diminishing cocoa-nut palms, whose hard leaves rattle in the breeze like the bones on a wayside gibbet; past the tall red ant-hills on which the great blue-bodied lizards mount guard and nod their coral-red heads at us as we pass, while the Bush around us gradually changes to woodland, and the woodland closes in denser and darker, while the open sunny path becomes a shady leafy way and the sodden sea-breeze gives place to the cool reek of the forest.

Four or five days of bush-travelling bring us to the hamlet of Pra-su, perched on the southern bank of the Pra. This was formerly the northern frontier station of the Gold Coast Colony, the river forming the boun-

dary, and on the northern bank of the latter we may consider the real interior as commencing.

From this point journeying northward nearly as far as the eighth parallel we shall travel exclusively through dense primeval forest. For near upon a month, after turning our backs upon the Pra, our way will lie through a land of twilight and shadow, with a canopy of murmuring foliage far away above our heads, and all around us the dim shapes of gigantic trees half hidden under a mantle of enshrouding epiphytes and wreathed with fantastic creepers. In the mornings the forests will resound with the melancholy drip of the falling dew; in the evenings the chirr of the cicada, the boom of the Goliath beetle, and the whistle of the cricket will fill the air; in the night the dark aisles will echo with the screech of the owl and the wail of the potto; but all through the day the forest will be as silent as the grave, and the smallest sound produced by the traveller himself, the creak of his boots or the crackling of a twig under his foot, will ring out in the stillness with the jarring distinctness that such sounds have at home when the ground is covered with snow.

The dense forest covers a great part of the interior of the Gold Coast, at least of the portion west of the Volta,—as to the eastern portion its value matters little to us seeing that it has all been absorbed by the Germans—and as it will probably turn out the most important part commercially, we may more particularly consider its extent and position.

Its superficial extent (in British territory), I should estimate at about twenty-three thousand square miles, distributed in the shape of an irregular triangle. The base of this triangle is formed by the western frontier where the forest extends southward

to the very margin of the sea and northward nearly to the eighth parallel. The southern border retreats from the sea very gradually, but the northern, or rather north-eastern, border slopes down abruptly after passing north Ashanti, skirting the south of Kwahu and the north and north-east of Akem, and terminating in the apex of the triangle on the western border of Krobo. The country which lies to the south of the forest varies considerably in character. Around Cape Coast and Elmina is a fine rolling country covered with bushes and isolated trees, varied by occasional expanses of high grass or round-topped wooded hills. To the west this bush gradually merges into the forest of Ahanta, while to the east it thins somewhat and the trees become less frequent, giving place in the Accra district to arborescent euphorbias. Near the apex of the forest triangle are the grassy plains and oil-palm forests of Krobo, and north of these the fertile prairie-like plains of Kwahu. Of the country that lies due north of the forest I shall speak presently, as it lies on the route that we are at present following.

It is not, however, in the physical characters of the country only that a change is observed on crossing the Pra. It is soon apparent that the inhabitants differ in many respects from those of the regions south of the river, and in none more than in the appearance of their villages.

In some of the villages south of the Pra, as, for instance, in Assin-Yan-Coomassie, remains of the old native civilisation may be seen in the elaborately sculptured gable-ends of a few of the more ancient houses; but as a rule the influence of the white man is evident on all sides, in the Europeanised houses with their wooden doors and latticed windows, as well as in the Manchester cloths which

many of the villagers wear. North of the Pra, on the other side, the old Ashanti style of building is almost universal, and the villages present an aspect of complete simplicity and barbarism. All these forest villages are similar in appearance. A clearing more or less circular in shape, is surrounded by a high wall of foliage, and is occupied by a large grove of plantains and papaw-trees from which a great part of the diet of the inhabitants is obtained. The narrow track widens as it enters the village, and on either side of it are the houses forming a single wide street with a few tortuous alleys leading off from it. Near the centre of the village street is the shade-tree, usually, in fact, I may say, invariably a species of fig of a spreading mushroom-like habit, under which all public palavers, and probably a great many private scandals, are conducted.

The residences consist of fenced compounds round which the houses are arranged, and these latter are characteristic and peculiar to the district. They are constructed of the local red clay coated with an ochre-like earth to which a dull polish is imparted, and are frequently profusely ornamented with designs in low relief, some of a very elaborate character and executed with remarkable skill and good taste; but the most striking peculiarity is in the general design of the houses, which is, so far as I know, unique. They have, in the first place, only three walls, the fourth side being open; and in the second, the entire house is raised on a platform, or plinth, of clay by which the floor is elevated nearly three feet from the ground. This type of house, which is almost universal in the forest region, is characteristic of the Ashanti race and its offshoots, and is certainly, from the freedom of ventilation that

it allows, eminently suited to a tropical climate.

As we enter these villages we shall find what appears to be the entire population either leaning against their houses or seated on the ground with their knees drawn up to their chins, presenting the appearance of a pyramid of cotton cloth surmounted by a head. Each person will probably be engaged in thoughtfully masticating the inevitable chew-stick (with which the African maintains the porcelain-like whiteness of his teeth), or holding it between his fingers while he delivers himself of a few comments to his neighbour on the passing stranger.

Travellers on this part of the road are rare. Once or twice a day a small party of natives may be encountered in the vicinity of a village, and three or four times a week a native trader with his little party of slaves carrying back to his home the goods he has purchased on the coast. These traders generally carry their goods in long narrow trays of wicker work, with high sides but without ends; and in these the various articles are packed neatly and securely and formed into a solid package which is easy to balance on the head. The quantity of goods that can be carried in this way is most surprising, when regard is had to the distances travelled and the roughness of the road. One man, an Ashanti, whom I met near Bekwe, had merchandise, including guns and powder-kegs, piled up fully three feet above his head, and perched on top of all an English kitten evidently in great enjoyment of the situation. The number of these traders is small and the amount of trade that they represent insignificant, for, since the decline of the Ashanti kingdom, the demand in the forest region for European merchandise and (what is more important) the power of paying for it, have much dimin-

ished. At longer intervals, parties of monkey-skin merchants, natives of Cape Coast or Accra for the most part, may be met on the way to Bontuku and the northern forest-towns. They too will be loaded with merchandise, especially with American leaf-tobacco which may be sold to great advantage in Ashanti or used as a medium of exchange; or if returning they will have the skins sewn up in small bales in their trays. Perhaps they will be accompanied by returning parties of rubber-collectors with their unsavoury-looking produce in calabashes or wicker bags.

But when all is said there is little enough doing in the forest region, and the aspect of the place must be greatly altered since the days when Ashanti was a prosperous and powerful State, when the great kola trade was in full swing, and the wealth of the Soudan poured down the Salaga road to Coomassie. Yet if the newly acquired British territories are to be developed, the forest region must be the principal theatre of the development, since it is from thence that most natural productions of any value are obtained. If agriculture or planting is contemplated the forest is manifestly the most fertile region. The timber-industry, it is needless to say, must be carried on in the forest, and the same is the case with rubber, which is essentially a forest-product. Moreover, the forest region appears to be the most highly auriferous, for gold is found in abundance not only in Wassaw, where it is already being worked with success by the Wassaw Mining Company, but in Akem, Ashanti, Se-hui, and Jaman, some parts of which will, I think, be proved exceptionally rich.

Coomassie, which we shall pass through on our way north, need not detain us long, for most of the old interest is gone and it has not yet acquired any new. With the

disappearance of the native rule there has been a disappearance of native commerce and industries. The old arts of silk-weaving, cloth-painting, gold-casting and *repoussé* work, wood-carving, and the execution of the curious mural reliefs with which the buildings were embellished in the palmy days of the Ashanti capital, have either totally died out or are at their last flicker. Meanwhile no sign of European trade or industry replaces them, and so we turn from the capital of the forest region with the feeling that the development has yet to be commenced.

From Coomassie we have the choice of three routes, either of which will bring us to one of the termini of the caravan-traffic from the Soudan. In a north-westerly direction lies Bontuku, in a north-easterly Kantampo, while yet more to the east and at a greater distance lies the great mart of Salaga. All these towns are of considerable interest. In the prosperous days of Ashanti they were included in its territories and formed its ultimate commercial outposts. Their populations consisted, and still consist, principally of foreign merchants and their followers (natives mostly of the more civilised parts of the Soudan) or of colonists from the various Soudanese towns who have settled permanently and act as middlemen and agents in the caravan-trade. The great importance of these towns was formerly due to the immense trade with the far interior, of which Coomassie was the centre, and the number of caravans which were attracted to it, the roads passing through Salaga, Kantampo, and Bontuku respectively. Since the almost complete extinction of the great interior trade, the importance and prosperity of these towns have waned, but they still present sufficient activity to render them interesting, especially since

it is through them that an interior trade (if ever one comes into existence) must be conducted by the white successors of the Kings of Ashanti.

If we follow the Bontuku road (for although Bontuku has recently passed into the French sphere it will be worth while to bestow upon it a passing glance) we shall not begin to see a glimmer of the open country until we have reached the latitude of 7° 30' N. about eighty miles beyond Coomassie. Even here we shall be by no means clear of the forest, but still we shall encounter at increasingly frequent intervals tracts of land covered with high stiff grass and thinly sprinkled with small contorted trees, many of them bearing a species of sloe-like plum which the natives eat, and also yield a gum which is collected in some parts and sold in the markets. The appearance of these more open stretches of country is singularly like that of a large neglected orchard; and, in the dry season, when the trees are all leafless and the grass either dried up, burned, or devoured by the white ants and various graminivorous mammals, it has a rather desolate and dreary aspect, and is, moreover, wholly devoid of shade. Now and again one meets a treeless area covered with low soft grass, and again large tracts which support nothing but a lofty, reedy-looking grass from fifteen to twenty feet high. As a variation upon these, occasional clumps of fan-palms will be encountered and thickets of a small and stunted date-palm, while at rarer intervals the fantastic form of the "sepulchral baobab" with its colossal bole, its straddling roots and its puny branches from which dangle the velvet-covered pods of monkey-bread, will appear among its more slender congeners.

The population of this part of the country, the north-western border of Ashanti and the adjoining portion of

Jaman, is very scanty. The villages are separated by wide stretches of uninhabited country where the buffalo, the elephant, and the larger antelopes, together with leopards and lions, roam undisturbed excepting by the occasional visits of the ill-armed native hunter.

The villages are mostly of insignificant size, though often very trim and neat in appearance. In character they are quite different from the villages of the dense forest. The curious three-sided house with its high platform, its quaint sculptures, its bright red walls, and its palm-thatch roof, which is so characteristic of Ashanti, gives place to a four-sided house built on the ground and having a narrow door (but no window), a roof thatched with grass, or in some cases with the large leaves of a species of fig, and walls of the yellow clay which here begins to replace the bright red soil of Ashanti. In some cases circular houses with conical roofs, such as are found universally in the country of the Ntas, which we shall presently examine, are met with, having probably been built by immigrants from the north-east.

As a general rule these little villages appear well cared-for and prosperous in their primitive way. The streets are tidy and clean, and good shade-trees have been planted at convenient intervals; little plantations of tobacco (of a most vile quality) are surrounded with wooden fences, and large fields of yams and beans (which grow into little poplar-like trees) show evidences of careful tending. It is, however, evident, notwithstanding their appearance of simple and barbaric comfort, that the most abject poverty prevails in these hamlets, and that the whole wealth of the inhabitants is comprised in a few bushels of beans, a

few bundles of tobacco, a pile of yams, and a dozen or so of spectral fowls. Yet life is tolerably easy for these simple folk, and their possessions are sufficient to supply all their needs; for the Bush abounds in edible fruits of a coarse kind, while as to game, it is rare for a solitary traveller to journey a mile through this part of the country without meeting some kind of edible bird or beast, although to the members of a large party not a sign of life appears. Guinea-fowls, bustards, parrots, horn-bills, and various other large birds are plentiful in the orchard-country and on the skirts of the belts of forest that everywhere traverse it, while the spoor of antelopes (some of large size) buffalo, and wild pig is seen mingled with the tracks of the elephant and, near the streams, the hippopotamus. Monkeys too are plentiful and in great variety, and these the gentle villagers will devour, regardless of the claims of consanguinity.

The largest town on this route is Soko, and it is by no means a prepossessing one, the dirt and smell that are almost inseparable from a barbarous town of any size being its most conspicuous feature. It is only distant five miles from Bontuku and this, and the fact that it is on the main road between that city and Kantampo, probably account for its size and the importance of its market.

Bontuku itself is so different in character from the surrounding towns and villages that it appears as though it had been picked up in some distant part of the continent and transferred bodily to its present site. Its entire aspect is Oriental, and suggestive of the relatively civilised regions of the northern Soudan. Its streets, bordered by flat-roofed houses from whose parapets long water-spouts project, its quaint, ambitiously-

designed mosques, no less than the well-dressed crowds that fill its market-place and throng its approaches, belong to a level of civilisation totally different from that which prevails around. Interesting, however, as the town and its inhabitants are, we must only allow ourselves a brief glance at the market before proceeding to those portions of the interior which may be supposed to be more immediately connected with the future of the Gold Coast Colony.

If our examination of the market is made with a view to gauging the capacity of the country for commercial development, the result can hardly be otherwise than disappointing. Passing by the long ranks of small stalls in which the produce of the surrounding country is exhibited by Wongara and Jaman women, where citizens and housewives are engaged in the purchase of food and small household necessaries, we come to the booths of the merchants from the distant countries of the north and west as well as from the neighbouring kingdoms of Wongara, Moshi, and Dagomba.

Here we shall find an abundance of wares offered for sale, and the excellence of some of them may somewhat surprise us. Leather-work of the most elaborate and highly finished kind; cotton clothes of a quality not obtainable in Europe; camel-hair rugs with embroidered borders; handsome woollen burnouses and various ready-made clothing such as *tobes*,<sup>1</sup> drawers, caps, and wide hats, most of them highly ornate and worked with great skill and taste; weapons and implements

of the excellent native steel, in many cases inlaid with brass and copper—these, and a multitude of other native manufactures, awaken our admiration and, if we are collectors of curiosities, fill our breasts with envy. But for articles of European manufacture we mostly look in vain. A few fish hooks, a small looking-glass or two and a handful of beads (Birmingham, German, or Venetian) may be seen; but it is evident that their ordinary wants the Africans contrive to supply for themselves, and supply them exceedingly well.

If, instead of taking the north-westerly route from Coomassie, we take one of those which bear in a north-easterly direction towards Kantampo or Salaga, we shall emerge from the dense forest in a few days, and the greater part of our journey will be performed in the comparatively open country.

In addition to the tracts of land covered by the small gum-bearing trees, we shall pass at intervals through extensive plains almost exclusively covered by the slender Shea butter-trees (*Bassia Parkii*) and other prairie-like expanses of less extent containing few trees of any kind. As the road approaches Salaga it enters a wide treeless steppe which extends for many miles around and especially to the south-east of that town.

Salaga itself is a very curious city, if so dignified a title can be applied to a town of so little architectural pretensions. Unlike Bontuku, in which the architecture of the more civilised immigrants has replaced that of the aborigines, it retains the primitive type of building in use among the autochthonous Ntas of Gonja, notwithstanding that its inhabitants are principally natives of the great Hausa cities or the relatively civilised countries of the northern and central Soudan. An ordinary dwelling at

<sup>1</sup> The *tobe* is a loose wide-sleeved gown worn by the Hausas and other Mahommedan West Africans. The origin of the word, which is only used by Europeans, appears to be unknown.

Salaga consists of a collection of circular huts with extinguisher-shaped roofs of grass thatch. There are no windows, and the door is not more than four feet high. The huts forming the outside row of the group are connected by a wall about breast-high, thus enclosing a compound, and the entrance to the enclosure is through a hut of larger size which has two doorways, one of them opening on to the street and the other on to the yard. From this description it will be evident that the general appearance of Salaga is greatly inferior to that of its less important rival, Bontuku.

The origin of the interior traffic of which Salaga is a terminus, was as I have said, the great kola-trade of Ashanti, and with the almost complete disappearance of that trade has come a sad downfall in the fortunes of Salaga. A little kola, it is true, even now finds its way there, principally from Akem, but the trade is mostly of a general character, as in Bontuku. The most important of the commodities offered for sale in the Salaga market are the slaves, who are brought in from the east by the Hausa caravans, and from the northwest by the tall fierce Moshis, who appear to get a great part of their livelihood by raiding and enslaving their timid peaceful Grushi neighbours. The prices of these slaves vary from twenty to fifty thousand cowries, well-grown boys and young women being most in demand. Among the other live-stock offered in the market are the handsome white hump-backed cattle, which the Hausas use as beasts of burden and may often be seen riding along the caravan roads; some tall white and grey cattle probably from Moshi; goats, some of quite gigantic size and with long horizontal horns; the beautiful Fula sheep with high Roman noses and long silky wool; horses of

various sizes, and donkeys. The remaining contents of the market are very similar to those of Bontuku, but the exhibits are more numerous and better on account of the preponderance of the Hausa and Fula element among the merchants. There are also more traders from the coast, as the Hausa merchants of Lagos often come to Salaga with salt and other coast-products, and European goods.

Kantampo, which in many respects resembles Salaga, holds a somewhat different position from either of the other great market-towns by reason of its being especially the emporium of the kola; and notwithstanding the great decadence of this industry, the town presents a busy and animated appearance at the time of the kola-harvest. Then are to be seen the long strings of carriers from Ashanti, Akem, and Koranza, bearing on their heads baskets or large wicker-sacks piled with the purple-red nuts packed carefully in moist green leaves. There, too, are congregated the caravans of Mahomedan merchants with their multitude of slave-porters, their horses, donkeys, and pack-oxen. Many of these caravans may have been sojourning at Salaga, or at least in the Salaga district, for two or three years, trading up and down to Yendi in Dagomba, to Moshi, or perhaps westward into Mandingo-land; and they are now selling the products of their trading expeditions for kola, which is portable and is certain to sell at a good profit in their own country.

With this brief glance at Kantampo we must close our examination of this region, which, however it may deal with the prospector or commercial pioneer, will certainly reward with no niggardly hand the geographer, anthropologist, or scientific explorer.

R. AUSTIN FREEMAN.

## AN ENEMY'S FLEET OFF PLYMOUTH.

SOME time ago in editing a manuscript autobiography of James Northcote the painter, I came upon a letter addressed to him at Venice by his brother Samuel, then a watchmaker in Plymouth. It described a very curious and little known episode, the descent of the combined French and Spanish fleets upon the Channel in the autumn of 1779. Considering that the armament which then threatened our shores was the most formidable arrayed against Great Britain since the Spanish Armada, it is surprising that the incident is not more familiar ; and Samuel Northcote's letter, combined with the French account of the undertaking, makes one well disposed to believe that nothing but the incompetence of our adversaries saved us from an invasion which the country was not prepared to cope with. In America the war was going ill ; France was in league with the new Republic, and her fleet had met ours with indecisive result off Ushant ; Ireland was raising the Volunteers with a purpose at best doubtful ; and on June 16th Spain, having joined the alliance against Great Britain, openly declared war. The alliance had been concerted in the preceding April, and the plan of operations arranged. A fleet, composed of squadrons furnished by both Powers, was to cover the descent of a French army on the south coast of England. But, when the declaration of war was imminent, the Spanish fleet was not ready to put to sea, and the French Minister of War, M. de Sartines, conceived the fear that the British Channel Squadron, numbering some

forty ships, might blockade Brest and prevent the junction. Accordingly he ordered the French admiral, Count d'Orvilliers, to leave harbour at once, though he was extremely short of men. D'Orvilliers left Brest on June 4th with twenty-eight ships, and was joined by eight Spanish men-of-war at the end of the month. But sickness of the worst kind had broken out in the fleet. Even after five hundred men had been put ashore at Corunna and Ferrol, there were still over two thousand cases of typhus and small-pox aboard. Things got daily worse : D'Orvilliers received no instructions, and when on July 23rd the Spanish admiral, Luis de Cordova, joined him with twenty-eight vessels, everything was in disorder ; even a code of signals had to be improvised, and the French squadron, having been six weeks at sea, was running out of water and provisions. But the combined fleets reached the overpowering total of sixty-six men-of-war as against the forty which Sir Charles Hardy was supposed to muster.

By the beginning of August preparations were complete. The army of invasion, consisting of forty thousand men, was assembled in two main bodies at Havre and St. Malo, and four hundred transports were ready to receive them. Hardy had sailed in haste, at the end of June, gathering up ships in the best way he could, and after some delay, had at last quitted the Channel in the hope of preventing the junction off Brest. Nothing lay between the Allies and England. Moreover the country had been drained of its best troops for the

American war, and it was impossible to withdraw the garrison from Ireland ; so that everything seemed to promise success.

The first objective of the expedition was Portsmouth ; or, if Portsmouth proved unassailable, D'Orvilliers (who commanded the joint fleet) was ordered to occupy the Isle of Wight and fortify it in such a manner that it might be held by ten thousand men, and having established the French troops there, to proceed to other debarkations. On August 7th the Allies rounded Ushant and on the 14th sighted the Lizard, D'Orvilliers having it in his mind (says M. Chevalier in his *HISTOIRE DE LA MARINE FRANÇAISE PENDANT LA GUERRE DE L'INDEPENDANCE AMÉRICAINE*) to run straight into St. Helen's, or, failing that, to anchor in Torbay. But he was met by fresh instructions. A point near Falmouth was now indicated for the descent, and he was ordered to blockade Plymouth and thence detach two squadrons to Havre and St. Malo respectively which should escort the transports across. This was a serious alteration. The French had at that time no port in the Channel ; the fleet could not lie in Falmouth Roads, but yet would be obliged to cruise off that point in a stormy season of the year so as to keep in touch with the land-forces. D'Orvilliers complained bitterly of the change of scheme, but it seems very evident that to a resolute commander there was a great stroke open. He might have seized Plymouth, the second naval arsenal in England, where there were deposited a good third of the country's naval stores ; and even if the landing had not been made good he might have crippled our navy worse than if he had won a great battle. On August 17th the fleet appeared off Plymouth, absolutely unlooked for ; and the consternation

which it occasioned may be inferred from Samuel Northcote's letter, which I print by the courtesy of Mr. E. W. Hennell, who owns the manuscript autobiography of Samuel Northcote in which it is preserved.

*Plymouth, September 1st, 1779.*  
DEAR BROTHER,

I have delayed writing to you some time in expectation of getting some intelligence from Humphrey through Elford in respect to the importation of your pictures, but Humphrey has never answered the letter which Elford wrote to him ; we concluded that he could have given us every instruction. But surely you would run the greatest risk in the world in sending them to England, even in a man-of-war, at this time. We have accounts which are much credited that Gibraltar is invested by the Spaniards, but if this should not yet have happened there is great reason to expect that it will ere long, for the French and Spaniards have a very powerful fleet which has frightened us out of our wits by appearing off our Port. We had the first news of their approaching on Sunday, 14th of August, which was brought to us by the Cormorant who had been chased by them, and the next day they appeared to our great terror on our coast, to the number of eighty or ninety ships ; about fifty of these were ships of war of great force. You cannot think how formidable and how strange a sight they presented to me on getting to the brow of Maker Hill. When I first saw them they were at about the same distance as Eddystone is from us, and then about fifty ships had cleared the western point of land, and formed a mighty line, extending away to the eastward. They remained on our coast for several days, standing close in by day and keeping off by night,

waiting, as we supposed, for transports, with troops to destroy our docks, and this we had been taught to expect for some time before we saw the fleet of the enemy; but on Thursday a very brisk gale arose from the east which carried them out of the Channel and they have not appeared since. Six of their men-of-war stood so far in one day as to be within the bounds of what we call the Sound. Whilst they remained in the Channel they took about thirty prizes; and on the Tuesday forenoon the *Ardent*, an English man-of-war of sixty-four guns, came down the Channel from Portsmouth, and mistaking the enemy's fleet for ours fell in among them, and discovering her error too late was taken after an engagement of two hours, which was seen by many hundreds of people on Ramehead and Penleepoint.

You may well suppose that all this occasioned great terror and confusion among the generality of people, and even those persons of the stoutest courage looked grave upon the matter. The King's officers here were in the greatest fright imaginable, and well they might; for when the enemy's fleet first came on our coast we had nothing in readiness, either on Drake's Island or in the Garrison, to have made any resistance. Had any of the enemy's ships come directly into the port, they might have gone into Hamoaze and have played the devil with the docks and shipping, and nothing could have opposed them. You may possibly say, "But how could they have got off again?" Suppose they had not, but after they had done the mischief had laid down their arms and had been prisoners, surely the number that could have effected this would have been a trifling sacrifice. However, it is probable that they might have got off again.

I have heard that our Commissioner was in the utmost fright and confusion, that his blustering was stopped, and he even wept, crying that he should be ruined, for he doubted the destruction of the Docks, and that he sent away his movables into the country. Mr. Mudge represents the matter otherwise, saying that Ourry's regard for the honour of the British Flag was such that he wept to think of the indignity that has been offered to it. He was certainly frightened, and I believe that when a man is much frightened he thinks very little about national indignities. These are things which occur when the fear is gone off. Lord Shuldharn behaved so ill in his office at this juncture that General Grey told him, when Shuldharn accosted him at the Commissioner's, that he could take no notice of him, nor could he act in conjunction with such a man.

During the visit which the enemy's fleet made us, all business was at a stop; the Banks, Play-house, and Long Room were shut up; every thing was off the hinges. Somebody was stupid enough to cry a sale at the time for household goods, but not a single mortal appeared at it. Many women, and some of the more timorous of the men left the Town with their most valuable things. My neighbour, John Downing, sent away his shop-goods to Tavistock, and he has been ill ever since. Poor old Mrs. Fillis was so terrified that she could scarce support herself, and of the two, Bill's wife was worse. The carriages in Plymouth Dock and in the neighbourhood were held in pay by different families in order to set off at an emergency, and some who could not get chaises hired carts for themselves and their little ones.

At the very height of the alarm when the French fleet were off, the Mayor summoned the inhabitants to

meet him at the Guildhall in order to consult together about some mode of defending ourselves from the attempts of the enemy. Accordingly a great number of the inhabitants met and a subscription was opened immediately, and people subscribed very largely. I believe many thought that the more they subscribed the safer they should be, but it seems to me that money could do nothing in such an emergency to avert the blow. For by the time that the mischief would have been finished (had it been done at all) about two or three hundred undisciplined fellows were raised and armed, such as journeymen of various employments and several gentlemen's servants. These were formed into two companies; at the head of one is Mr. Alderman Nicolls, and the other has Adam Saunders for their Chief. These two companies call themselves Plymouth Volunteers and have sixpence a day paid them out of the fund. They are not yet clothed, but have been training ever since they were embodied. They exercise upon the Hoe very early in the morning and late in the evening, before they go to work in the morning and after they leave it in the evening. Had the French landed these would have proved of infinite disservice, for one cannot suppose that the French would have landed a few thousand only, and what impression could such a mob have made on ten or fifteen thousand disciplined troops well supported with cannons? Nor could much better things have been expected from the others, the independent company. But I have no doubt it would have proved destruction to the town by their appearing in arms, which, it seems, usually happens in such cases.

Mr. Bastard and his sons became very active in raising men in their neighbourhood, and these were sent to guard the French prisoners in their

march to Exeter, as it was thought dangerous to keep them so near the sea-coast, and much parade was made of the affair. Mr. Bastard has in consequence of his zeal and services in this affair been created a Baronet.

We have now a very martial appearance in our neighbourhood. On the ground near Maker Church is encamped a Highland Regiment lately raised, and on the same side of the water are encamped at different places the Hampshire and Leicestershire Militia; the Wiltshire Militia lie encamped just outside the Dock-lines, and we have the Middlesex and the Devonshire Militia in Barracks. We are now making a battery on the West Hoe, another on the high ground near Crimhill Passage, and a third on Mountwise; the two first were begun since the enemy's fleet appeared on our coasts, but the last was begun early in the spring. We have also seven hundred Timmers digging the ditch deeper on the Dock-lines; they look as thick as insects.

The appearance of the combined fleets really frightened a few people to death. I forgot to mention a matter which greatly terrified many. The next morning after the enemy's fleet had first appeared on our coasts, at daybreak the Sound was found to be spread all over with transports, and these were mistaken by the people of the Garrison and the Island for the enemy's transports, and accordingly the signal was given to the several camps in our neighbourhood of an enemy's landing by firing three cannons. These proved to be our own transports, which together with coasters, &c., came down from Portsmouth not knowing of any danger, and luckily came in the night at which time the enemy's fleet had stood off (as they did every night); but in the morning when they stood in for the shore again they met with

the Ardent and took her. She convoyed down those transports, but happened to be somewhat behind them ; she got a sight of the French fleet just as she got to the mouth of the port, and thinking it to be our fleet she ran into the mouth of the enemy. I myself saw her running down to them as I happened to be in the Garrison about ten o'clock.

Yours, &c.,  
S. NORTHCOTE.

The reasons why D'Orvilliers acted as he did, or rather refrained from acting, are given very fully by M. Chevalier. He appears to have been left no discretion by his orders, an admirable instance of what follows when generals and admirals on active service are closely controlled by the bureaucracy at home. He had been sent to sea in a hurry, and no preparation had been made to enable the fleet to keep the sea for a long period ; sickness had spread so rapidly that his ships could scarcely be worked, and the weather was heavy with easterly winds which drove his fleet down Channel. However, on August 22nd the wind lightened, and he was able to redistribute water and provisions so that all ships were in a position to cruise for another month. But their instructions contemplated their keeping the sea for an indefinite time, and this seemed impossible. On August 25th news came that Hardy's fleet was lying off the Scilly Islands, whither he had been driven by the same easterly gales. A council of war was held : the alternatives were to pursue Hardy, or to carry out the original scheme ; and by unanimous vote it was decided to abandon the project of invasion. D'Orvilliers accordingly sailed west, having had Plymouth at his mercy for a week.

On August 31st the English fleet was

sighted ; it ran for home, and, though chase was given on September 2nd, it entered Plymouth Harbour four or five leagues in front of its pursuers, D'Orvilliers at the last moment turning off to follow fifteen ships sighted to leeward, which proved to be only Dutch merchantmen. Thus foiled at every point the French admiral returned to Brest, and was, as it would seem not unjustly, deprived of his command.

It is true, as M. Chevalier points out, that he was hampered by the ignorance of naval considerations shown by De Sartines. But once he had the power to blockade Hardy in Plymouth, it is not clear why it was not open to him to detach a small escort and order the transports to cross. A few months later, when Parliament met in November and debated the Address, an estimate of the possibilities was given by the Duke of Richmond, who was in the neighbourhood of Plymouth at the time ; and his picture of the unpreparedness of the town fully bears out that given by Northcote. He was astonished, he said, when he beheld it weak and defenceless as it was. "There were guns and shot, but neither the one nor the other answered ; but if there were guns and shot, all kinds of what are called small stores were totally wanting ; there were neither handspikes to work the guns and give them the necessary direction, nor wadding - rammers, sponges, spring-bottoms, nor in short any one part of the apparatus fit to receive an enemy." To work two hundred guns there were only thirty-eight artillerymen, most of them old pensioners. Lord Sandwich in reply explained that five hundred seamen accustomed to artillery were available in the town, but even this number was totally insufficient. And further the preparations improvised at the moment

were singularly futile. The officers in local command had ordered a boom to be prepared ; but when it was partly finished an emissary was sent down from headquarters to cause vessels to be sunk in the channel, thus, as a measure of self-defence, rendering the port and arsenal inaccessible to our own fleets. Neither measure was adopted ; and (as Northcote points out) the French fleet might, at the sacrifice of two or three ships, have burnt the town and all its stores. But with their army and transports ready at Havre they might have attacked the place from the land. Ten miles to the west of Plymouth a debarkation might have been safely effected, and of landward defences the town had none. The truth of this was at once admitted by Lord Amherst, then officiating as Commander-in-Chief of the forces ; his only defence was that the possibility had never been contemplated, and that he had only been concerned to assure himself that Plymouth was impregnable from the sea. As to the question of stores he could only say that there were plenty of them ; but that if the balls did not fit the calibre of the guns that was no fault of his. In the face of this amazing statement little weight can be attached to the official optimism of Lord Sandwich, then First Lord of the Admiralty, who declared that the defences of Plymouth were in a condition approaching the ideal ; and the charges brought against the Government by the Duke of Richmond and other speakers in the debate were sufficiently established to prove that, when D'Orvilliers withdrew from the Channel of which he was fully master and foiled the whole scheme of invasion, he thoroughly earned his disgrace.

It is true that, as he pleaded, and as M. Chevalier urges in his defence,

his ships were ill-found and short-handed owing to sickness. But it is not to be supposed that Hardy's fleet was in any better condition. Hardy himself was an emergency appointment ; Keppel had resigned the command of the Channel Fleet in a fit of pique with the Admiralty, and no one could be found to take his place until this old sailor, who had not been to sea for twenty years and had never before held an independent command, was dragged from his retirement. A resolution was passed in Parliament which abolished all exemptions from the press, and men were raked in anywhere and anyhow. Every ship that could be accounted sea-worthy was put in commission, and the difficulties that their commanders met with may be judged from a single case, that of the *Ardent*, the frigate which ran into the allied fleet unawares and was captured in sight of Plymouth. The story of her brief commission was narrated in the number of this magazine for August, 1887. She was not ready to put to sea from Spithead till August 13th and even then the readiness was questionable.

Her sails were cut too large ; her rigging was turned in with more drift than ought to have been, to allow for stretching, and the whole of it was, in fact, in a very unfinished, crazy state. Her crew of four hundred did not contain more than two hundred seamen, if so many ; all the rest that were not officers and marines were what were then called landsmen,—mostly men who had never been to sea, who had never seen a gun fired, and who did not know the difference between an eighteen and a twenty-four pounder when they saw the guns.

Of the seamen, one hundred were men just home from the West Indies ; their pay was three or four years in arrear, and they had no clothes. They not unnaturally refused to weigh anchor, until at least the clothes should be forthcoming. No official

could be found to sign an order for them, and finally the captain had to sign on his own personal responsibility. The question of pay was allowed to stand over, and the Ardent put to sea with a crew half mutinous and three parts ignorant of its duties. They were to seek the British fleet which was somewhere at sea, but no intelligence of it was forthcoming and on the 17th they sighted it, as they believed, ran cheerfully into the middle of it, and then discovered that the ships belonged to the enemy. Things had begun in a muddle and they ended in a muddle. The Ardent ran for Plymouth pursued by the enemy's frigates and exchanging shots with them; till suddenly, without the

captain's orders, and by whom no one knows, the ensign was hauled down. The pendant, however, was still flying; there was an attempt to make sail, but after a half-hearted effort at escape, the pendant also was hauled down, and the Ardent surrendered. Her captain was dismissed the service, protesting violently in his defence against the state of confusion on board his ship involved by the conditions under which she had put to sea. It is not a creditable end to the story; but as one reads the episode, it seems very clear that England got out of it very cheaply with the loss of one frigate and the sacrifice of a certain degree of her naval prestige.

STEPHEN GWYNN.

## AT THE THEATRE ROYAL, BROADLANDS.

*Holidays having begun the Broadlands Theatre will re-open to-day at 11.30 Tuesday morning, July 5th, 1898. A Tableau of the famous Play of Trilby will be performed. Also stirring scenes from the Bible, Morning-Post, and Shakespeare. Admission for Relations and Servants 1 penny; Dogs and Children half price.*

This notice, printed in large characters of a blood-red hue, was pinned up outside the dining-room door as we came down to breakfast. Fastened to my plate by a piece of sticking-plaster I found a folded paper, inside of which was written, *one complimentary stall*; but the wind was rather taken out of my sails by the old Admiral opposite proclaiming his paper to be *one complimentary Royal Box*.

"Did you get the private paper I stuck on your plate?" whispered the small voice of Midge over my shoulder, as I sat in the verandah reading the paper after breakfast.

I expressed my gratitude and sense of the distinction conferred on me by the generous directors of the Broadlands Theatre.

"Don't forget, doors open at 11.30, curtain rises at quarter-past five. Mummy says it can't rise sooner," added Midge sadly, "cause you'll all be out drivin' or somethin'."

"Why open the doors so early then?"

"Oh, 'cause of the crowd for the pit. There's always an awful crowd for Trilby, you know; seats have to be reserved soon as possible."

"I see. And who are the actors to-day?" I asked.

"Well, me, of course, and Harold and Sue. Fitz does the stage-managery." Then confidentially: "We've got such a scrumptious tableau for Madmeselle! Fitz made it up 'cause he and Maddy's always quarrelin' about pore Dryfuss. She can't abide him; but Fitz doesn't care, now it's holidays. He's nine last birthday, you know; I'm six. I must go now. You can go on readin' your paper while I'm gone, can't you?" Having thus provided for me in her absence, Midge vanished.

We were at five o'clock tea when the Stage-Manager descended to collect his audience. They proved a troublesome lot, and the Manager, hot and flustered, had to resort both to threats and bribes. Daddy and Cousin Dick had gone out forgetting all about it, and what was worse, taking with them Nipper, the fox-terrier, who was cast for an important part. It was *too* bad. Mama would stop to finish a letter. Grandmama, a smart little lady with marvellous blonde curls and surprisingly black eye-brows and red lips, together with Aunt Pheebe, her elderly daughter, would not be hurried over their second cups. Nurse, unearthed reluctantly from her domain, took her seat in the stalls with Baby, declaring she oughtn't to be wasting her time over such silly antics. Mademoiselle came in last, explaining elaborately that with this performance she had absolutely nothing to do; her advice had not even been asked; she trusted therefore we would excuse all shortcomings. A loud cough of disapprobation from behind the scenes was the only response.

A bell sounded, and the curtains divided, rising slowly on either side, "like what they do at Her Majesty's," as Midge had pointed out to me.

"The Altogether tableau from *Trilby*, the most famous play of the day," announced the Stage-Manager.

There was a moment of intense suspense, and Midge's mother subsided with a sigh of relief as *Trilby* was revealed perched on a high stool, dressed in a short holland tunic and knicker-bockers of scarlet satin, a blue ribbon across her breast, and a soldier's cap on her curly head. Her little bare legs and feet proclaimed her an ideal *Trilby*.

"*Trilby bein' drawn by her faithful lovers altogether*," emphasised the Manager, "Little Billee, Sandy, and the Laird; they are drawin' pictures of her lovely feet, ahem! [with a derisive cough] for the Roy'l Academy."

The three artists, in workmen's blouses, pipes in their mouths, paint-brushes in hand, gazed at *Trilby* adoringly. At least two of them did so; the third, with his back to the audience, appeared overcome with emotion having fallen forward on his easel, and there was a loose-jointed look about him which seemed to threaten a speedy reversion to cushions and sandbags. *Trilby* looked down smilingly on her adorers with a mischievous coquettish expression which never altered a shade during the three minutes the curtain was raised, a feat suggesting long practice in the dramatic art.

"There will be no Stage-Manager present in the next tableau as he's got to make the thunder for the murder; you can't have murders without a storm," explained the Manager, "and Harold's got to do the lightnin'."

As the curtain rose, a voice from behind the scenes gave out: "Subjick

of next scene,—Shakespeare in dumb acting. The Moor makes an end of his unforshonate wife Desdemona, revenging himself for her suspected unfaithfulness." There was a nervous cough from Aunt Phœbe, and Madeleine murmured: "Oh, la-la! Mais voilà, ce n'est pas ma faute si on aura des histoires!"

Vivid flashes of lightning revealed Desdemona in a large bed on the floor sleeping peacefully, in spite of the harmonium-thunder close to her head. Enter the Moor in night-shirt and smoking-cap, a long rope and knife in his hand. He walks up to the bed and shakes Desdemona, who, terrified, jumps out and kneels before her lord in a white night-dress and blue sash. He replies by dragging her round the stage by her sash and, after strangling her with the rope, plunging the knife into her; whereupon red paint gushes out over the night-dress, and the youngest member of the audience lifts up his voice in a sympathetic howl.

"End of Desdemona," announced the Manager drily as the curtain descended.

"Aye, and it's the end of me and Baby too," cried the indignant Nurse. "No more Shakespeares for us, thank you! There, my dearie, it's all over," —and folding her weeping charge in her protecting arms she marched out shaking the dust off her feet.

A pause now took place for refreshments: "No extra charge," observed Midge, handing large lumps of dark brown toffee round to the audience. At the end of five minutes a bell rang and silence was peremptorily enjoined as the curtain rose on a fresh tableau, revealing Midge, Harold, and Sue, in the guise of three mustachioed military gentlemen, epaulets and cocked hats indicating plainly their exalted rank, all busily writing at a table.

"These are the three chief Generals

of the French army," proclaimed the Stage-Manager. "They are busy forging letters against Dryfuss,—the innocent man," he added slowly, with a sidelong glance at Mademoiselle.

"Ah, *par example*, *les petits diables!* *Ca c'est vraiment trop fort!*" exclaimed that lady, and rising in high dudgeon she left the theatre.

"Mademeselle had best come back as the next one is English," cried the Manager. "That's the only French tableau for to-day." He was glad his shaft had gone home so straight, but three empty seats in the middle of the house was depressing.

"The next two tableaux are taken from curious and intrestin' facs in the *MORNING-POST*," gave out the Manager as the curtain rose.

In a couple of large gilt armchairs sat two venerable grey-haired little gentlemen, their velveteen breeches and jackets decorated with gold lace, gold coronets encircling their grey heads. Before them stood a shadyl<sup>o</sup>oking individual in a great coat and tall silk hat, holding in each hand a large paper bag inscribed with the figures £10,000. These he humbly tendered to the haughty occupants of the gilt armchairs, who regarded the tempter sideways.

"Hooley bribin' the Dukes to sit at his board," announced the undilinching voice of the Manager. There was a violent movement from the Royal Box (an armchair erected on a table draped with scarlet cloth); the armchair tottered, and I distinctly caught the word *deuce*.

We waited somewhat anxiously for the second part.

The three previous characters were discovered sitting round a dinner-table in company with a lady of pillow<sup>y</sup> appearance and fixed expression, also four flaxen-haired children of admirable behaviour and very stiff joints. Hooley's face radiated satis-

faction as his eye rested on his distinguished, though supercilious, guests, by each of whose plate lay a bulging bag inscribed £10,000.

"The Dukes sittin' at Hooley's board," was the announcement; then in a thoughtful undertone: "Can't think *why* he was so jolly keen on gettin' 'em into his Company."

The occupant of the Royal Box was now emitting sounds so strange that I feared an apoplectic fit. Afterwards I learned that the Admiral was a director of several Companies.

"The concludin' tableaux will be out of the Bible," announced the Stage-Manager as Hooley and the Dukes disappeared from view.

The mother of the Broadlands Theatre Company rose hastily and went behind the scenes. "Don't stop 'em, for heaven's sake!" called a voice from the Royal Box.

"I think perhaps it's as well to know what they're going to do," observed Grandmama; "I don't like any irreverence."

An agitated whispering now began behind the scenes. Presently an eager voice was heard: "No, I promise you,—it's only out of the Old Testament. Oh, please, Mummy, don't look; you'll like it awfully." More whispers followed, and then in a sudden burst: "Oh it's too bad! How can a feller stage-manage if the audience comes and interferes? There, you've looked!" Then was heard Midge's shrill pipe: "But how can we do Adam and Eve with our clothes on? Harold and me's not a bit cold in these leaves, really and truly we aren't!" Now followed an interval of silence, broken at length by an impatient voice: "Sue? She's the Devil; she's havin' her face blacked."

This proved too much for the audience. There was an eager cry, especially from the Box: "Yes, yes,

let's have Adam and Eve!" But the Powers that Be decreed otherwise, and this instructive tableau was ruthlessly cut out of the programme.

It was a very dejected Stage-Manager who announced the next item. He "had hoped to give something before this, *ever* so much nicer, but a Certain Person, whose name he scorned to betray, had (worse luck) prevented it." At this point he was somewhat cheered by an addition to the audience, Daddy, Cousin Dick, and Nipper whose services were at once requested behind the scenes. Mademoiselle also slunk back to her seat, curiosity getting the better of pride.

"Jezebel at her winder,—Jehu and his three dogs calling to the eunicks to throw her out."

Leaning out of an opening, high up between the window curtains, was a little old lady bearing a startling resemblance to Grandmama, with the same blonde curls, marked eyebrows, and crimson lips. Grandmama raised her gold eyeglass and bent forward. Yes! It *was* her best Paris bonnet with the pink moss roses! What on earth could Félicie be about to have let them get at it! And,—her finest lace mantle! A Certain Person recognised with a gasp her blue silk skirt draped over Jezebel's shoulders!

Jezebel's expression was smiling and defiant; you could almost hear the taunting words she hurled at the doughty warrior below. The likeness between Midge's Jezebel and Midge's Grandmama was staggering. The curtain fell amid a storm of applause in which Daddy's claps were conspicuous, his mother-in-law alone appearing lukewarm.

"Jezebel has now been thrown out of winder; the next scene will explain her trachick end," announced the indefatigable Manager. "There'll be a storm," he added, "but the lightnin's got to be sheet, 'cause there's no one to do the thunder."

The curtain rose slowly, as though reluctant to reveal the horror behind it. Huddled on the ground lay the blue silk dress and mantle, but where was Jezebel? The three dogs gnawed away ferociously at some horribly suggestive bones, and strewn about were various articles of apparel, a boot, some stays, the bonnet with pink roses, a pair of spectacles, and in the foreground a double row of grinning teeth, the sight of which caused both Grandmama and the Admiral to put their hands anxiously to their mouths,—a needless alarm; they were the cook's.

"Oh, *mon Dieu!*" cried Mademoiselle suddenly. "Regard then Nepair, what his 'ee takin' in de mouse?"

Nipper had advanced to the front with a curious object between his teeth, a tuft of fluffy blonde curls, which he shook savagely and then tore at with his forepaws.

There was a shriek in the audience, followed by a general commotion. Everybody seemed to be rushing on the stage. The dogs set up a furious barking which ended in a free fight, between Nipper and the Irish setter, for the blonde curls, the distracted Stage-Manager vainly trying to rescue them. His voice at last rang out above the tumult: "Ladies and gentlemen, to-day's performance is endid. This theatre will re-open to-morrer."

But the Broadlands Theatre did not re-open on the morrow.

## THE EVOLUTION OF THE AUSTRALIAN.

To enable us to understand the ardour of the Australians in cricket and other athletic sports, we must go back to the early days of Australian colonisation and study the influences then at work in moulding the Australian character. By this means we may perhaps learn something of the causes which underlie national characteristics and assist in their development; and it is not altogether impossible that this study may throw some light on the evolution of racial and national characteristics generally; because, by applying the knowledge gained of one section of the human family, we may, by analogy, account for some of the distinguishing traits in the characters of other branches. One of the common attributes of humanity is self-esteem, and a man without any trace of it would be a very poor creature indeed. But, like all other virtues, when carried to excess it becomes a vice. It degenerates into vanity or self-conceit; and it is not infrequently the case that a vain or self-conceited man is the only person in the community who is unaware of the failing. A vain man is usually impervious to either ridicule or expostulation, while at the same time he resents vanity in others. What self-esteem is to the individual patriotism is to the nation, and the larger virtue is equally as persistent as the smaller one. They run together like hounds in a leash, and are inseparable. In the case of the native-born Australians a systematic, though unconscious, effort was made to stamp out self-esteem, and with it of course patriotism; and, if this effort has

failed, it is because the natural characteristics have persisted in asserting themselves in spite of opposition. To realise how this effort was made it is necessary to study, not the Australian in the first place, but the Englishmen who first colonised Australia.

The average Englishman of the first half of the present century was mightily proud of his country and himself. His victories under Wellington and Nelson had induced him to believe that one Englishman was physically a match for three Frenchmen, and he proclaimed that belief as loudly as possible. He was convinced that there was no other country on earth to compare with his island-home; and he was as proud of being able to say "I am an Englishman" as any old Roman of them all was of proclaiming "*Romanus sum.*" I have no desire or intention of even hinting that sometimes, perhaps, in the opinions of others, these Englishmen may have gone perilously near to overstepping the narrow line which proverbially divides the sublime from the ridiculous. For this excessive love of country is not peculiar to the English. We know that, while the Englishman was strutting about the world, like a peacock in his pride, challenging all and sundry to produce his fellow, the sentiment of patriotism was not entirely unknown in France, while the Americans were boasting that "the Britisher whipped the world, and we whipped the Britisher." We laugh at the poor Chinaman, who claims that he only is the son of Heaven and that all other men are

mere barbarians; but we fail to see that we ourselves, in common with the people of all other countries, hold somewhat analogous beliefs. Even the Australian savage, whom we place on the lowest rung of civilisation, will tell you, if you succeed in winning his confidence: "White fellow bally fool; build it railway for black fellow to ride in."<sup>1</sup> In fact, to him the white man is a vastly inferior person who has been sent into his country by some special providence to administer to his wants and pleasures. National vanity is as universal as personal vanity, and is sometimes carried to excess in all countries.

The earlier Australian settlers, apart from the convicts, were soldiers, brave, swaggering fellows, who had served in the Peninsular and other wars, who swore by King George, and longed for the time when they might again be called upon to fight his enemies. To them the Englishman was the salt of the earth. They taught even their children, born in Australia, that they were in some way inferior to the English-born residents, and that nothing produced in Australia could equal the similar products of England. No doubt, they suffered from nostalgia, and that distance lent enchantment to the view. Australia differs so completely from England, in climate, scenery, and everything else, that even now, although the Australians themselves recognise that it has a beauty of its own, an Englishman has to reside there many years before he sees anything to admire in the country. But to these early settlers, who lived

there when Australia was little better than a wilderness, there was nothing good in the land. They distinguished between the Englishman there and the native-born by calling the latter *Currency* and themselves *Sterling*.

To explain the meaning of these terms, as applied in Australia for many years, it is necessary to refer briefly to the financial conditions in the Colony. There was little agriculture and no other industry; consequently the money, sent out periodically for the payment of the troops and officials, was speedily returned in payment for food, clothing, and other necessaries. There was therefore a chronic dearth of money, and anything in the shape of a coin was accepted in local exchange. Dutch guilders, Venetian ducats, Indian rupees, mohurs, Johannes, anything and everything passed current; but the commonest coins were Spanish dollars, and all these were passed at more than their intrinsic value. To make the dollar go farther, and to prevent it from being sent out of the colony, a piece, rather larger than a sixpence, was stamped out of the centre. The outside piece was known as the *holey dollar* and passed for the original value of the coin, namely, five shillings, while the piece punched out was known as a *dump* and was current value for one shilling and threepence. Both pieces were stamped *New South Wales*. English crown-pieces were treated in a similar manner, and were likewise known as *holey dollars* and *dumps*. But these measures proved insufficient, and therefore for a time merchants were authorised to issue promissory notes, for as low as five shillings, and these were declared current by Governor Macquarie. These notes and debased coins were known as *Currency* while the English money, which was not

<sup>1</sup> It is the custom in many of the Australian colonies to convey the Blacks to the towns on their annual visits (and frequently on other occasions) on the Government railways, free. They ride in the break vans, or in a truck, and have evolved the belief that the trains are run specially for this purpose.

tampered with, was called *Sterling*. The notes were withdrawn in 1829, in consequence of some scandals, but the holey dollars and dumps continued to circulate until a much later date. It was not until after the Colonies had been granted constitutional government that the financial difficulty wholly disappeared. Until then copper tokens were issued by the merchants and traders of Sydney, Maitland, Melbourne, and Geelong, and passed current all over the Colonies until the various governments obtained a full supply of copper coins.

These being the facts the meaning of the term *Currency*, as applied to the young native-born Australians, is plain enough; they are not *Sterling*. They accepted the title, as children always accept what their parents tell them, without protest. The assumed fact, that they were in some undefined way inferior to the born Englishman, was impressed upon them from their earliest years, and they grew up to believe it themselves. They were also taught that England was the most beautiful country in the world. Even the fogs were an advantage, because they relieved the Englishman from the continuous glare of the blazing sun. Everything English, in fact, was seen through spectacles which hid all defects and magnified all virtues. Before the great influx of population which followed the discovery of gold in 1851, and which swamped the older population and blotted out many of the ancient traditions (ancient, that is to say, for Australia), it was no uncommon thing to hear young girls declare that they were "Currency lasses," while the boys when questioned would say: "I'm not English; I'm *Currency*." They had become accustomed to the name, and took a pride in it, notwithstanding that it had originally implied infe-

riority. But the new comers of the Roaring Fifties knew nothing about *Currency*, and the term gradually dropped out of use till it has now almost been forgotten; but the belief it had once represented continued as firm as ever, and the native-born Australians were spoken of by the English residents in an indulgent manner. They could do many things very well, for Australians, but they could not be expected to compete with Englishmen.

I will give one or two illustrations of the prevalence of this belief. One day a bullock-dray was being unloaded or loaded in front of a store in Yarra Street, Geelong. The bullocks were drawn up in the gutter to leave the road clear for traffic, when some lucky diggers from Ballarat came swaggering past. One of the bullocks made a sweeping cow kick at them, and a digger jumped out of the way just in time to escape being knocked over. He drew himself up and addressing the bullock in mock indignant tones said: "Why, you colonial-bred beggar, would you dare to kick at an imported man?" The words were repeated, and soon became a cant phrase in Victoria. The imported man was the lord of creation: all *Colonials* were his inferiors; and the *Colonials* themselves accepted this doctrine because it had been impressed on them from babyhood. In 1858, when in Ballarat, I went one evening into the boxing-saloon just opened by Mat Hardy, in connection with the hotel he had taken, after having been beaten in the fight for the championship of Australia by Joe Kitchen. Two young Australians, from the Sydney side (for Victoria was at that time too young a colony to have grown-up natives of its own), were pummelling each other in the ring and Mat was looking on, as master of the ceremonies, with an indulgent expression on his features. As I passed him

I said, "They're making it pretty lively, Mat." "Yes," he replied, "there's plenty of action: they hops about like kangaroos; but, lor bless yer, they couldn't stand up to a Hinglishman. They ain't got no *honesty*." Fortunately my self-control enabled me to abstain from laughing until I was out of his sight; but I have since frequently wondered what particular meaning he attached to the words. Probably he meant strength or stamina. In 1867 I was one day sitting talking to the late Mr. E. Capper, a prosperous merchant and a magistrate of West Maitland, New South Wales, on the verandah of his private house. Presently his eldest son, about twenty-two or twenty-three years of age, came out of the house, with a bridle on his arm, to catch a horse to ride into town. He jumped off the verandah, bounded across the lawn and, putting his hand on the top rail of the fence which divided the garden from the grass paddock, vaulted over. His father looked after him fondly and, as he disappeared among the trees, said: "He's a fine fellow; several inches taller and bigger in every way than I am. He might be an athlete if he only trained; but there is something about him that is not English. I always fancy his limbs are flatter and thinner than an Englishman's would be." "Have you ever measured and compared them?" I asked laughing. "No," he replied; "but I think I can see the difference." "In fact," I said, "he's Currency." Mr. Capper laughed. "The old word has died out," he said; "we never hear it now, but I believe it is true for all that." "But what proof have you?" I asked. "None; but everybody says so, even now," he replied; "it's a matter of common notoriety." I said I did not believe it and mentioned the names of several native born Australians who

had met Englishmen in the prize-ring and beaten them, but Mr. Capper clung to his old-time belief. "They may be successful here sometimes," he said; "but look at Dick Green. He won the sculling championship here, beating every one, including two or three Englishmen; and yet you see he's come back beaten." Green had just returned from a voyage to England to challenge the champion-sculler of the world, but did not meet him, having been challenged and beaten by another man on his arrival in England.

I might cite numbers of instances to prove that this was the prevalent feeling in Australia, but these should suffice. The belief was general and had grown up with the Colony. It will be readily understood, therefore, that when the first team of cricketers, with H. H. Stephenson as captain, landed in Melbourne, in December, 1861, no one in Australia even dreamed of opposing them on level terms. The only desire of the Colonists, immigrant or native born, was to see what the Englishmen could do. Their exploits were quite equal to expectation; they played all games against heavy odds, winning eleven, drawing four, and only losing one. The teams captained by Parr and W. G. Grace, in 1864 and 1873 respectively, were about as successful as the first team. Parr did not lose a game, and although Grace lost three it was always against odds, for the Australians had not yet gained sufficient confidence to meet the Englishmen on level terms. I use the word *confidence* advisedly; for, as will be remembered by those who resided in the Colonies at the time, the whole force of public opinion was against them, and any one who knows what an influence that has on the mind of a man engaged in a contest with another man will be able to realise

how it affected the Australians. However, when Lillywhite's team visited the Colonies in 1876 it was beaten several times by teams of fifteen. In January, 1877, it was engaged in a match against fifteen of New South Wales at Sydney. The match was for four days, but the Englishmen were beaten in two by thirteen wickets, and, to make up the time, Lillywhite proposed to play an eleven-aside match. This ended in a draw in favour of the English, but as it was merely a scratch affair this is of no great importance. It was taken rather seriously, however, in Sydney, and it was said that the Australians threw away what little chance they had of making a respectable show by loose fielding. During the journey of the English team to New Zealand the subject was much debated, and the result was that a Combination Match of eleven aside was arranged to take place in Melbourne in March. It is worthy of note that the first team to meet an English eleven on equal terms was not an Australian team, but a combined eleven from Victoria and New South Wales; and perhaps this indicates that the federal feeling had not then advanced so far in Australia as it has since, and that possibly cricket may have had some influence in promoting it. In reporting the result of the match the *MELBOURNE ARGUS* of March 20th, 1877, said :

The above match ended yesterday in an unexpected victory for Australia. A great triumph has been won by the Colonial cricketers, for they have beaten the best professional eleven (if one or two men be left out of account) which probably could be got together in the old country. It is necessary to emphasise the word *professional* lest hasty people should run away with the idea that Colonial cricket has proved itself equal to English cricket. . . . Very few professed judges of the game had any doubt at the commencement of the play

yesterday that the English eleven would win the match. Some persons, in language to be admired for its suggestive brevity rather than for its elegance, pronounced the result to be "a moral for Lillywhite's eleven."

The event was deemed worthy of a leading article in the same paper, in which occurred the following passage :

It may be permitted to the Australians to take some little credit to themselves for the signal victory which they have just gained over the English cricketers. Forty-five is a large majority for mere Colonials to have gained in a well-fought cricket-field against the pick of English professionals. So far as we can recollect, English cricketers have never before played outside England on equal terms and been beaten. In Australia they have before now played teams exceeding themselves in numerical force with varying results, but the match just concluded is the only one in which an English eleven has contended with an equal number of opponents not of English birth and met defeat. Of course it may be said that Lillywhite's eleven now in Australia is not the best possible English eleven, and it is certain that it does not comprise all the very best English batsmen, since a very large proportion of these is always to be found among the gentlemen players, who are not always available for travelling teams.

The article proceeded to show that the "mere Colonials" should not be unduly elated with this victory, but concluded by admitting that "there is no sufficient reason why our cricketers should not strive after a still higher degree of excellence and skill than they have yet exhibited." The Colonists were taken completely by surprise at the victory. It was so entirely opposed to their traditional belief that many persons tried to find excuses for the visitors. One or two even went so far as to say that the English cricketers had not played their best, and had permitted the Colonials to win as an encouragement to them to try again

on level terms, but this was generally scouted as absurd; it was impossible for Australians to believe that Englishmen would act in so unworthy a manner. But it was quite conceivable that the Englishmen might have been out of form, that they were tired, or affected by the climate, or amiss in one way or another; and there was a widespread belief that, when next the Colonials met them, the Englishmen would show their true mettle. The ancient tradition was as yet too firmly established to be abandoned so readily. It had been shaken, no doubt, when Tricket won the sculling championship on the Thames in 1876, and had thus avenged Green's defeat twenty years earlier; but popular superstitions are not easily eradicated. Indeed, people sometimes appear to cling to them the more tenaciously in proportion to their absurdity.

It is unnecessary to pursue the history of Australian cricket any further here. The evolution of the Australian Team from the combined eleven, and its doings on both sides of the equator, are too well known to need any recapitulation. But, perhaps this little excursion into one of the byways of Australian history,

which has hitherto been almost unexplored, may be of interest. The Currency lads, the mere Colonials, have begun to develop self-esteem and a love of country, and are therefore anxious to prove that they are not physically inferior to the other branches of their race, and that the Anglo-Saxon has not degenerated by being transplanted to the southern hemisphere. Hence their determined struggle to find out of their comparatively small population men who can meet Englishmen on the cricket-field or in other manly contests on equal terms. One of the signs of the spread of patriotism in Australia is the growing disinclination to the use of the words Colonial or Colonists as applied to them, and this does not imply any desire to withdraw from the Empire. Their love and admiration for England is not being weakened by their patriotism, probably because the tie which binds them to the land of their forefathers presses so lightly upon them. But they wish to prove that they are worthy sons of those fathers, and that the Anglo-Saxon is as vigorous and as young in Australia as he is elsewhere.

GEORGE E. BOXALL.

## A HISTORIC HEIRLOOM.

AMONG the hereditary treasures preserved at Hamilton Palace there is one of singular historic interest, the identity of which, accidentally revealed by the perusal of a paper among its contents, has remained unsuspected during many years. The object in question is a silver casket which, for more than two centuries, has been an heirloom of the House of Hamilton, and which, as appears from the testimony of the document aforesaid, is none other than the celebrated casket wherein were once enclosed the letters which, justly or unjustly, have so gravely affected the fame of Mary, Queen of Scots.

On Thursday, June the 19th, 1567, James, fourth Earl of Morton, Chancellor and future Regent of Scotland, whose sordid, cruel countenance looks down, from the walls of the little dining-room at Hamilton Palace, upon the descendants of that great house which he so remorselessly persecuted, was at dinner in Edinburgh. The city was still seething with the excitement of the final scene in that astounding drama of crime and violence which had distracted the country throughout the past three-and-twenty months. Many and strange, indeed, had been the events crowded into those months, which had beheld in rapid succession the marriage of Mary and Darnley, the wedding of Bothwell and Lady Jane Gordon, the murder of Rizzio, the tragedy of the Kirk-of-Field, the abduction of the Queen, Bothwell's divorce from his wife, his marriage with his Sovereign, their flight from Holyrood, the Queen's surrender at

Carberry Hill, her return, amid scenes of painful ignominy, to her capital, and lastly, only two days previously, her consignment to the Castle of Lochleven.

While Morton thus sat at table, his crafty brain busied with forecasts of the probable result of this concluding act, there entered to him suddenly a messenger bearing tidings of great importance. Three of Bothwell's retainers, — Hepburn, minister of Oldhamstocks, John Cockburn, and George Dalgleish—had entered the town and were even then within the Castle. Bothwell who, four days previously, had bidden on Carberry Hill a last farewell to the Queen whom he was never to see again, had immediately afterwards mounted and galloped off, accompanied by a small band of followers, towards Dunbar, in which fortress, as its governor, he was sure of finding refuge. Arrived there, he had discovered with no little concern the loss of an object on which he set great value, but which, in his haste to get away from the capital, he had left behind him in the Castle of Edinburgh. This was a casket about a foot long, silver-gilt, and bearing the crown of France and the initials of Francis the Second. It contained papers of great importance, which Bothwell was very anxious to recover, and he had sent his emissaries to the Castle for that purpose.

Morton at once took steps for their immediate arrest, by which prompt action he succeeded in capturing two out of the three, of whom George Dalgleish was one. Dalgleish, who was a personal attendant of Bothwell,

was, in point of fact, already wanted at this time as an accessory to the murder of Darnley, for which crime he suffered duly in the course of the following year. Certain documents, the property of his master, were found upon him, and, although he stoutly denied having carried anything else out of the Castle, his report appeared so doubtful and his demeanour was so suspicious, that Morton ordered him to be kept close that night and to be put to the torture on the morrow. This prospect had the effect of bringing Dalgleish promptly into a more convenient frame of mind ; and he next day intimated his readiness to go, accompanied by Robert Douglas, to his lodging in the Potter Row, and to hand over all that he had there, including this silver casket, which he had conveyed out of the Castle on the previous day and which was now put into Morton's keeping.

A council of the Confederate party was summoned on the following morning to investigate the matter. There were present Atholl, Mar, and Glencairn, Home, Sempill, and Sanquhar, the Master of Grahame, the Laird of Tullibardine, Archibald Douglas, and, pre-eminent among them all, Maitland of Lethington, he whose persuasive charm and personal ascendancy no man could resist, and whose refined features and intellectual countenance formed a fit setting for the subtle brain of one of the ablest diplomatists of the time. The casket was produced and laid before the assembly by Morton ; and as it was locked, and no key forthcoming, it was forced open, when the papers which it contained, and the fateful letters, upon which hereafter so much was to depend, were disclosed.

The history of these letters is so well known, that it would be superfluous to do more than recall their memory as briefly as possi-

ble, and so far only as it concerns the story of the casket from which they take their name and with which their fortunes were inseparably connected. Besides the marriage contract of Mary and Bothwell, and some other unimportant documents, the momentous portion of these papers consisted of eight letters and of certain sonnets, all of which were declared to be in the somewhat unusual handwriting of the Queen, and which, if genuine, contained incontestable proofs of her criminal correspondence with Bothwell and of her consent to the murder of Darnley.

The contents of the casket having been duly considered by the Council, were afterwards replaced in the box, which was then again entrusted to Morton in whose charge it remained for more than a year. Meanwhile, the Queen's difficulties with her subjects, and the question of her complicity in Darnley's murder, had led to the Conference at York ; in view of which the casket was, in September, 1568, delivered to the Regent Murray, who gave a receipt for it to the Privy Council in which he describes it as a silver box overgilt with gold. By his orders, Maitland, Makgill, Wood, and Buchanan were deputed to show the letters privately and confidentially to the English Commissioners who, in their report to Queen Elizabeth, write of them as closed in a little coffer of silver and gilt, given by Mary to Bothwell. The Conference adjourned in November to London when, both at the preliminary meetings at Westminster and at the subsequent enquiry at Hampton Court, the casket was formally produced by Murray and inspected by the English Commissioners, who call it the little gilt coffer. Upon the inconclusive termination of these proceedings, it was carried back by the Regent to Scotland,—its transit to London and its

return thence having been alike threatened by Mary's friends—and in his charge it remained until, in 1570, he met his death by Bothwell-haugh's carbine in the high street of Linlithgow. Its custody now devolved upon the new Regent, Lennox, and its last public appearance was in January, 1571, when it was once more consigned to Morton, who was then starting on a diplomatic mission to London, and who, in his receipt, describes it as a silver box overgilt with gold. In the course of the following year Morton succeeded to the regency, and henceforth, until his execution in 1581, the little coffer and its momentous contents continued in his keeping.

The year after Morton's death, Bowes, the English Ambassador, received instructions to do his utmost to procure the letters for Queen Elizabeth, whose object in desiring to obtain them was, obviously, to justify her action in keeping Mary a prisoner in England. Bowes, with considerable difficulty, succeeded in tracing the casket to Gowrie, to whom it had been delivered after Morton's execution by his natural son James, Prior of Pluscardin. The Ambassador at once proceeded to prefer an urgent request that the letters should be given up to Elizabeth, diplomatically suggesting hopes of a liberal reward, and also informing Gowrie that King James knew where the letters were, concluding with a grim warning of the danger he was incurring by retaining them. Gowrie at first would not admit that he possessed this perilous treasure, but seeing that Bowes's information was sure, he promised to look for them on his return home, being then at Holyrood. He did not, however, promise to give them up, and neither the Ambassador's threats nor his diplomacy availed to make him do so. The

Duke of Lennox, as the representative head of the Catholic party in Scotland, was equally anxious to obtain the letters, but was equally unsuccessful; and in Gowrie's charge they remained until his execution in 1584.

From this date all trace of the letters vanishes, while a blank occurs also in the history of the casket, which has, indeed, been generally supposed to have disappeared with them. Various theories have at different times been propounded as to the fate of the letters. It has been thought by some that, upon the death of Gowrie, they fell into the hands of the Earl of Arran; while others, including Laing, have supposed that they passed into the possession of King James, by whom they were destroyed. This conjecture would appear, on the whole, to be the most probable, and, if correct, it would seem to follow naturally that the King should at the same time desire to get rid also of the casket, forming as it did a compromising link with the incriminating papers.<sup>1</sup>

That the celebrated letters have long since and for ever vanished, is now generally recognised; but for more than two centuries after the execution of Gowrie the hope of discovering them was never entirely abandoned, and, although futile, so far as the immediate object was concerned, the researches made in this direction, read in the light of the recently revealed paper, have unquestionably indicated with accuracy the destination of the casket. The first of the notices

<sup>1</sup> "The source from which we now know their nature is a Latin translation of them appended to Buchanan's *DETECTION OF THE DOINGS OF QUEEN MARY*, published in 1572. In the translation of that work, which appeared in the same year and is attributed to Buchanan himself, there is a rendering of the whole into the Scots vernacular, and of nearly the whole into French."—Burton's *HISTORY OF SCOTLAND*, iv., 253.

which affects it occurs about the year 1660, when an anonymous historian, quoted by Goodall, affirms "that the box and letters were at that time to be seen with the Marquis of Douglas." Goodall, commenting on this statement says, "It is thought by some that they are still in that [the Douglas] family, though others say they have since been seen at Hamilton"—each writer, as will be seen, being correct (having regard to the respective dates) in his surmise.<sup>1</sup> Further light was thrown on the subject in 1810, when Laing wrote to Mr. Alexander Young, the Duke of Hamilton's agent: "I am induced to trouble you with this letter in consequence of the unexpected discovery of the casket that contained the Queen's letters to Bothwell, being still preserved in the archives of the Hamilton family."<sup>2</sup> He then proceeds to ask for particulars relating to its acquisition by that family, and for a description of the box, but subsequently dismisses the question of its identity on a technical point. Among historians of the present day, Mr. Henderson has also noted the possible authenticity of the Hamilton casket; but as it appears that he has never personally inspected it, the grounds on which he declines to accept its identification can hardly be accepted as conclusive.

The important and interesting paper, of the existence of which none of the authorities above quoted appears to have been aware, and which circumstantially confirms the various surmises as to the destiny of the casket, was disclosed by the merest accident during a visit paid to Hamilton Palace in the course of the autumn of last year. I had

<sup>1</sup> EXAMINATION OF THE LETTERS OF MARY, QUEEN OF SCOTS, TO BOTHWELL; by Walter Goodall. Edinburgh, 1754.

<sup>2</sup> Laing's letter, which is dated September 22nd, 1810, is enclosed in the casket.

asked to be allowed to see the ring bequeathed by Queen Mary to Lord John Hamilton, and it was accordingly produced for my inspection by its courteous custodian, Mr. Duncan Barr (the Duke's chamberlain), in the muniment-room of the palace. My attention was at once drawn to the great beauty of the silver casket in which it is kept, but concerning which no details were believed to have been preserved. It so happened, however, that while examining the various relics contained in the box, I asked a question as to the purport of some papers which had apparently lain in it unnoticed and unread during many years. The first that was opened was a letter written by James, first Duke of Hamilton, to his servants, on the night before his execution in Palace Yard; while the second proved to be none other than the history of the casket itself, and is as follows:

This silver box, gilded and carved with the arms of Her Grace Dutches of Hamilton on it, was the box that caryd letters and tokens by messengers to and againe between Queen Mary of Scotland and the Earle of Bothwell. Which my Lady Marquis of Douglas, mother to William, Duke of Hamilton, bought from a papist, having then the Queen's arms upon it, and putt her own arms thereon, and afterwards having left all her Exc Eie [personal property] to her son Lord James, her plate was all sold to a goldsmith, and the Dutches of Hamilton being told by my Lady Marquis that the said box did once belong to the Queen, Her Grace bought the same from the goldsmith, and att the Duke's desire putt out my Lady Marquis' arms and put Her Grace's own arms on the same.

This box had two keys, whereof the Queen keep one and the Earle of Bothwell the other; but Her Grace only received one of them and believses my Lady Marquis had never the other.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> No papers of the Marchioness of Douglas or of the Duchess of Hamilton relating to the casket can be found.

My Lady Marquis of Douglas, it may be explained, was Lady Mary Gordon, daughter of George, first Marquis of Huntly, married in 1632 (as his second wife) to William first Marquis of Douglas. Her eldest son, Lord William Douglas, was created Earl of Selkirk, and married Lady Anne Hamilton, eldest daughter and heiress of James, first Duke of Hamilton, who, upon the death of her uncle William, second Duke, became in her own right Duchess of Hamilton, and who subsequently obtained for her husband the title of Duke of Hamilton for his life.

It is obviously to be inferred from the paper that, when placing her own arms on the box, Lady Douglas effaced those which had been previously engraved on it. These are stated to have been those of the Queen, whereas it was the initials and crown of Francis which the historic coffer is recorded to have borne. But this mistake may easily have arisen from the fact that the paper, which from its handwriting and forms of expression is evidently of the eighteenth century, was drawn up many years after the death of Lady Douglas by, apparently, some member of the Duchess of Hamilton's household,<sup>1</sup> who having never seen the casket in its original state, but having been told that it had belonged to the Queen, would naturally have assumed that the arms erased were hers. The key which the Marchioness received with it, and which is unquestionably a very old one, may possibly have been recovered by King James, with other of his mother's possessions, after her execution; or, on the other hand, the duplicate which belonged to Bothwell may have been found in Edinburgh Castle, after the box had been forced open, concealed in

a certain green velvet desk in which he left sundry of his papers.

Lady Douglas died in 1674, and the casket may therefore have been bought by her at any time between her marriage (in 1632) and that year; a circumstance which bears out the testimony of the historian quoted by Goodall, that about the year 1660 the celebrated coffer was in the Douglas family. After her death it was, as the paper records, bought from the goldsmith by her daughter-in-law, Anne, Duchess of Hamilton, and has ever since been preserved as an heirloom in her family; which fact corroborates the statement made by Goodall in 1754, to the effect that it was reported to have been seen subsequently at Hamilton. Its history, during the interval between the death of Gowrie and its purchase by Lady Douglas, is a blank; but it seems not improbable that, after 1584, it may have fallen into the hands of some Catholic family, by whom it may have been kept as a relic, up to the time when, through the medium of the nameless papist, it passed into the possession of Lady Douglas.

The casket, which is exceptionally beautiful both in design and execution, is pronounced to be a specimen of French work of the early part of the sixteenth century. But it seems also to show indications of Italian influence, and may possibly have been wrought by one of the Florentine artificers who were brought to Paris by Catherine de Medici, while the scroll decoration of the lid bears a close resemblance in detail to the tooling on a book which once belonged to her, and which, stamped with her cipher and crown, is now preserved in the British Museum. The lid, which is slightly arched, is covered with fine raised scroll-work, divided into compartments by raised bands, and both the scroll-work and bands have been gilded.

<sup>1</sup> Anne, Duchess of Hamilton, died in 1716.

The sides and ends of the box are divided by similar bands into panels, which are filled in with tracery of birds, dogs, and other animals, branches and leaves; but no signs of gilding remain either on the panels or on the groundwork of the lid. The casket is hinged at one of the short ends of the oblong, and on the opposite end there is affixed a small case, containing the lock, with a sliding front which it was necessary to push aside before the key could be inserted. The lock was attached to the box by four small looped wires or rods, and there can be no doubt whatever that it has been forced open with considerable violence, for not only has the lock been torn off, but the loops of the wires have been driven completely through the outside of the casket. The arms of the Duchess of Hamilton are engraved in the centre panel on one side, and are placed over an evident effacement. In the smaller panels on either side there are four little silver loops, designed, as it would appear, for handles; and on the under side there are two hall-marks, which have been recognised by an expert as the mark of a French silversmith, consisting of a distinctive sign surmounted by a fleur-de-lys and a crown.

Before arriving at any definite conclusion on the question of the authenticity of this heirloom, it may be well to compare the foregoing details, most kindly furnished by Mr. Duncan Barr, with the accounts of the celebrated casket which have been handed down to us by those who themselves inspected it. It is described by Murray as a *silver box overgilt with gold*. The English Commissioners at York write of it as a *little coffer of silver and gilt*. Morton, in his Declaration, calls it a *certain silver box overgilt*. At the

Westminster Conference it is spoken of as *the little gilt coffer*. In the Scots version of Buchanan's *DETECTION OF THE DOINGS OF MARY, QUEEN OF SCOTS*, it is reported to have been *one small gilt coffer not fully a foot long, garnished in sundry places with the Roman letter F, under a King's crown*.<sup>1</sup>

The points to be considered are :

1. The historic casket was of silver over-gilt. *The Hamilton casket is of silver parcel-gilt, the raised work having all been gilded*.

2. It had belonged to Francis the Second. *The Hamilton casket bears a French hall-mark, and is pronounced to be of French workmanship dating from the early part of the sixteenth century*.

3. It is described as a little coffer. *The Hamilton casket answers precisely to that description*.

4. Its dimensions are said to have been not fully a foot in length. *The exact measurements of the Hamilton casket are, eight inches long, five and five-eighths inches broad; the greatest depth of the arched lid is four inches and a quarter, the least three inches and three quarters*.

5. Morton testifies that it was forced open. *There are unmistakable signs that the Hamilton casket has been violently forced open*.

The one point only where the proofs of identity fail, is with regard to the initials and crown of Francis; these are wanting in the Hamilton casket, for which reason its authenticity was repudiated by Laing. That they were engraved on the original coffer has been generally accepted by historians, although it may be observed that Buchanan, alone apparently of those who actually inspected it, has

<sup>1</sup> "By the Roman F's in the description of the Casket," writes Laing, in his letter to Young, "is meant what we now call the italic F."

recorded their existence. They are, moreover, not mentioned in the original Latin of his *DETECTIO*, but appear for the first time in a memorandum to the Scots version of that work, which cannot with absolute certainty be attributed to him. But, however this may have been, the statement that the casket was garnished with sundry F's and crowns is undoubtedly open to question; for had they been employed so profusely, they could hardly have failed to attract the attention of the English Commissioners and of those other witnesses who examined and described it, all of whom are silent concerning them. It would seem, consequently, safe to conclude that they were placed (the initial F being possibly repeated and intertwined, so as to form a cipher,) in the space now occupied by the arms of the Duchess of Hamilton; and their disappearance may be reasonably accounted for by their having been effaced by Lady Douglas on acquiring the casket, in order to make room for her own arms. In view, therefore, of the important testimony afforded by the interesting document thus preserved within the box, and of the unquestionable coincidence in detail with what is actually known of the historic casket, it cannot be disputed that there is extremely strong presumptive evidence that this Hamilton heirloom is really the celebrated casket around which must ever cling the pathetic memory of the fascinating woman whose fame and fortunes were so direfully overshadowed by its contents.

The ring which, with other interest-

ing reliques of the Queen, is now kept in the casket, was left by her, on the eve of her execution, to Lord John Hamilton, then virtually head of the House of Hamilton. "She took a ring off her finger," writes Bishop Burnet, "and gave it to one of her servants, and ordered him to carry it to her cousin Lord John Hamilton, who then represented his father that was dead (his elder brother being sick of a frenzy), and tell him that that was all she then had to witness her great sense of his and his family's constant fidelity to her, and of their great sufferings for her interests; and desired that it might still be kept in the family as a lasting evidence of her kindness to it, which is preserved to this day."<sup>1</sup> The ring is a fine square sapphire, mounted in gold and set in a border of white enamel raised over blue, in the graceful *cinque-cento* work of the period, and bears on it the following inscription:—*Sent by Queen Mary of Scotland att her death to John Mar. of Hamilton.* Lord John who, in 1599, was created Marquis of Hamilton, was grandfather of James and William, respectively first and second Dukes of Hamilton, and the ring which he thus bequeathed to his successors, has been ever carefully cherished by them as the last token of affection and gratitude from the Queen and kinswoman whose cause the House of Hamilton supported so loyally, and in whose service they suffered and lost so much.

MARY A. BAILLIE-HAMILTON.

<sup>1</sup> *MEMOIRS OF THE DUKES OF HAMILTON.*

## A HERO OF THE PANTHEON.

ANATOLE was the chamber-maid at Madame Lecour's, if such an expression may be used in order to convey to English readers an idea of something which does not exist in their country. In France the work of the house is usually performed by men. It is the *garçon* who polishes the wooden floors, makes the beds, fetches the water, and lays the fire. Anatole performed these humble duties. He was *garçon-de-chambre*, a profession distinctively French, and especially Parisian. The little man was chubby and strong, not very tall, but with very broad shoulders and bright red cheeks which gave him an infantine air. He had always deplored his diminutive stature until the war of 1870 broke out, when he blessed it, for it saved him from the conscription. Anatole did not want to fight, at least not against the Prussians. He had theories of his own, and in the infrequent intervals of making beds and dusting the stairs he used to read papers which were not sold on the boulevards. The police would have pounced upon the sort of papers Anatole read.

The Commandant found him one day reading a particularly violent revolutionary sheet and he promptly confiscated it. " *Parbleu!* " said the old gentleman, his snowy moustache curling with anger, " thou head of a calf of an Anatole ! What sort of an animal wilt thou be shortly, cramming such stuff as this into thy silly noddle ? *A bas les rentiers*, indeed ! Piff, a nice idea ! Is it the Terror thou wouldest like to set up again in Paris with a Robespierre in perma-

nent session ? Thy white servant's apron would then be wanted to make sacks to hold heads like thine when chopped off. *A bas les rentiers*, —fool that thou art, give me that preposterous paper and never let me see thee read it again, else there'll be no New Year's gift for thee."

Thus the Commandant, who carried his militarism as well as his years with all the vigour of youth, and yet he was close upon seventy. Anatole, who liked the Commandant, as everyone did, submitted to have his revolutionary paper confiscated, and then, so soon as the dear old gentleman had spluttered downstairs, he produced another copy from under his white apron. Anatole was enjoying the sweets of authorship ; he had himself written that furious article against the income-holders, and always read it with supreme satisfaction when he had a moment to himself.

Now Anatole would have been perfectly harmless except for circumstances and the influence of the Père Godillot. The circumstances which gave Anatole his chance were the hapless circumstances of the war of 1870. When all the good material of the French armies got itself taken prisoner at Metz and elsewhere, the authorities were obliged to fall back upon the refuse of the population. Thus it chanced that Anatole was swept into the Gardes Mobiles, notwithstanding his brief five feet of height.

" The infamous ones ! " he exclaimed almost in tears to the Père Godillot ; " see they have caught me and put

me into this ignoble uniform to set me up for the Prussians to aim at."

"My son, have patience. Who knows? There may be an opening for thy talents yet."

"Not in the army," objected Anatole, somewhat comforted all the same by the dexterous flattery.

"Even in the army there is scope for him who has an eagle eye to perceive the moment from afar. Events are preparing themselves," said the Père Godillot, with the earnestness of a prophet and the vagueness which suits that perilous rôle.

"Hein, the army, as thou sayest, might be a stepping-stone for him who desires to mount," remarked Anatole, thoughtfully examining the india-rubber lining at the ends of his trousers.

"The army can be made useful to further our views," said the Père Godillot, "and the moment is well chosen for a — *Dieu de Dieu!* Save thyself in the cellar. Quick quick! It is our only chance."

"May the devil fly away with that cannoneer! There goes another. Sacred name of a pipe! This is too much," cried Anatole, scuttling downstairs in all speed after his host.

This sudden interruption in the philosophic discourse of Anatole and the Père Godillot was occasioned by the entirely unexpected arrival of a bombshell in the adjoining house, a demonstration which caused the collapse of the upper portion of the building, and which was followed in two seconds by another projectile that hissed fiercely overhead and went to explode on the Quai Voltaire.

The Père Godillot, near whose domicile this uproar took place, was a shoe-maker of the Latin Quarter, well known for the ferocity of his revolutionary opinions and the excellence of the leather which he put into his shoes. He was a picturesque

ruffian, with an immense shock of curly black hair just turning grey. This hair he dressed with a care due rather to the mocking admiration of the students of the Beaux Arts than to his anarchical opinions, which in a consistent person should have affected his head inside and out. The Père Godillot was vain of his hair and his whiskers (his cutlets, as he called them,) which were of the same ferociously curly description. His little shop, which could with difficulty hold two people standing upright, was situated in the middle of the Rue Visconti, an ill-looking dark opening, blackened by the hand of Time without having been beautified by it. The sun never did and never could shine into the Rue Visconti, which has led an evil existence of five centuries of misdeeds great and small without being discovered by the world. Vast then was its amazement to find that the Prussian gunners had made out its lurking-place and had planted one of their lively bombs there.

The Rue Visconti with a fierce yell of anger retired to its cellars and awaited the future. This was the first day of the general bombardment, and Paris had not got accustomed to those hissing serpents of shells coming from the clouds.

"For me," said the Père Godillot, resuming his conversation for the benefit of Anatole and the other refugees in the cellar, "I look upon these Prussian bombs as useful pills; they will purge Paris. There are many people in our city who should be removed for the sake of the better health of the remainder."

"How the devil do you know the pills will purge the right ones? The next bomb may make a *fricassée* of you or me instead of those gentry at the Hotel de Ville," said Anatole to his Mentor.

"You speak without reflection. We take precautions; thus we inhabit the cellars. They must remain in the gilded halls of the Municipality. A shell can easily reach them; it may do our work for us."

"It may do for me too," growled Anatole sulkily. "I've got to return to the camp in the Boulevard de Clichy. It isn't gay, I can tell you."

Mounting guard on the ramparts by day and by night, an insufficiency of food, and clothes rapidly wearing themselves into cobwebs, were the finest possible arguments in favour of the most violent communistic theories to a man of Anatole's temperament. He was ready for the 18th of March when it came, and ready to hold up the stock of his gun along with the other mutineers when they refused to obey their officers. He yelled himself purple in the face on the day of the manifestation at the Hôtel de Ville, and carried one of the red flags when the Commune was declared.

"My son," said the Père Godillot, "keep well in front. The People has a quick eye and a short memory. Be in evidence always. Observe that family of the Buonapartes; they understood at least so much as that of the art of ruling. The first Napoleon never permitted himself to be forgotten."

Anatole nimbly climbed to the top of a lamp-post and bandaged it with a red cloth. This linking his name with that of Napoleon the First made him nearly burst with pride. It was the secret wish of his heart to become a Napoleon the First; it was the secret wish of them all, the Cluserets, the Bergerets, and the Raoul Rigaults. The Père Godillot, on the other hand, dreamed of a quieter rôle. He was a bit of a philosopher, and he realised that the world produced only a limited number of Napoleons; it seemed to

him improbable that the same country could bring forth two such men in the course of the same century. Moreover he was ignorant of the art of war and personally much averse to it. He had escaped military service so far, only by a severe course of fly-blistering and acute suffering. He proposed to himself to inspire Anatole to deeds of heroism, and then by means of adroit flattery to reap some of the more substantial benefits thereof. He would be the Talleyrand of Anatole's Napoleon, and, like his prototype, would enjoy the sunshine of the hero's course and also survive his fall.

Anatole tried hard to keep in the front, but there were so many others elbowing him out of the first place that he found himself quite a long way down in the ranks of the ambitious. He wanted to be elected to something or other, but the People, who were called upon to elect every second day, got tired of it and would not attend.

"Citizen," said the Père Godillot, "attach thyself to some individual likely to rise to notice. Then, when the moment comes, seize it and mount over his head. Napoleon had his Barras, and his moment came in the Garden of the Tuilleries."

"How shall I know when the moment arises? There are so many of them in one's life," objected Anatole.

"Genius will tell thee," replied the Père Godillot sententiously.

Roussel was one of the many men appointed by the Commune to the supreme command of its heterogeneous troops. Anatole attached himself firmly to Roussel, devoutly hoping that he would prove strong enough and would last long enough to float him, Anatole, into the rarefied air of Parisian notoriety. "Citizen Delegate," said he to Roussel, "I have

always advocated your talents to the members of the Committee of Public Safety. They have made you commander; what will you make me?" Time was scarce in Paris, and Anatole went straight to the point.

"Citizen, accept a command at Neuilly, while awaiting a higher one at Issy when it occurs," replied the Commander.

Anatole decided to wait, particularly as Neuilly was at that moment being smashed to smithereens by a constant fire from the guns of Mount Valerien. A few days later he sought counsel of the Père Godillot. Times were getting very difficult even for patriots.

"My fat rat," said the Père Godillot, looking very anxious, "I know not what to advise thee. The questions are getting complicated. People are suspicious. Hist, listen; every one is suspect. I am denounced to the Committee; any day I may be arrested. You know how severe a wound I had on the arm?" Anatole grinned. "In spite of my sufferings I have been forced into the service. I have enemies; they denounce me; I can save myself only by volunteering for active duty. I construct this barricade, as you see."

"Very good," said Anatole with little sympathy.

"It is not good, at least not for me. A hint I'll give thee; abandon Roussel. He is no help any longer; he is suspect; he is denounced, and he has no friends on the Committee."

"*Parbleu!*" exclaimed the amazed Anatole. "Then what will the Committee of Public Safety do if it throws suspicion upon tried patriots?"

"*Chut*, there is no Committee of Public Safety, only a Committee of Public Suspicion. From to-day no more barricade-building for me. I prepare for the future."

"How?" asked Anatole, his jaw dropping.

"I hire a little *entresol* in a quiet street in Bercy; no one knows me there. I provide myself with a few valuable pieces of furniture from the house of that rascal Thiers. It belongs to the People; I am of the People; I take my little share. I decamp before it is too late. Do the same, my child. We will meet again after."

"After what?" asked Anatole.

"After the events which are preparing themselves in the future," replied the Père Godillot, moving slowly away from his unfinished barricade.

Anatole looked after him darkly. "Shall I denounce him? The traitor! But no; it is wiser not to make him an enemy. He is powerful; he may be useful to me after the events of the future shall have accomplished themselves."

He went moodily back to his station near the Arc de Triomphe to be informed that Roussel had not only been arrested but had likewise escaped to Versailles. The fort of Issy, moreover, had surrendered. Anatole was glad he had not yet obtained an exalted command there from the hands of Roussel. He resolved to take no command at all; for the moment it was better to be obscure. He obscured himself still further by taking off his uniform and returning to the other side of the river. The attack was so lively on the gate at Neuilly, that he preferred a more retired spot.

All might have succeeded according to his hopes except for that confounded corps of *Citoyennes Volontaires* from the Twelfth Arrondissement. The chief duty of this brigade of Amazons was to hunt out deserters. They had an eye for a man; the she-devils, no one could

escape them! One of them, before she became a Citoyenne Volontaire, had been a washerwoman in the street where Anatole was *garçon-de-chambre*, and she had looked upon him with favour. His evil star brought him face to face with this Fury just as he was trying to obscure himself in the Latin Quarter. She knew him on the moment; of course she did, and knew moreover what he was doing. She was going to denounce him to the authorities, for the anger of a woman scorned is proverbially severe. Anatole bought himself off by declaring in a breath that he loved her to distraction and was on secret military duty. She resolved to see that one of these statements was made true to some extent, and brought him in triumph to the nearest military station at the Panthéon.

Too hard pressed for men to be particular about inquiring into the truth of his asseverations, the captain accepted Anatole with effusion, popped him into a uniform, and clapped a *chassepot* upon his unwilling shoulder. The citizeness too smiled sweetly upon him and said, as she kissed him in farewell: "Ah now thou art launched on a career of glory, my hero, and all through me!"

Such was Anatole's state of mind that he would have gladly planted one of his bullets in her plump person had he dared.

It was on May 22nd that the above episode took place in the career of Anatole; it was on the 23rd that the Versaillais troops got into Paris and brought to a close many careers. As the circle of fire and steel narrowed around Anatole at the Panthéon he became like an infuriated tiger. Perhaps it was the flames of the burning Tuilleries that got into his head. His captain had now no need to keep an eye upon him for fear of his deserting; on the contrary the soft-cheeked man

was possessed with a veritable mania of destruction. "Those dogs of Versaillais," he would scream as the shots came nearer, "they think to take Paris! They don't know; we have the hearts of real Republicans; there have been no true ones till now. Paris will not be taken alive. We will be buried under the ashes of our city and live for ever in men's memories, a terror to traitors."

When the news came that the Versailles troops had penetrated into the heart of the city, a ferocious and sanguinary despair took possession of the men who were fighting at the Panthéon. They bound themselves by oath to resist to the last, and then to blow up the building. The crypt was used as a store-house for gunpowder and was supposed to be still nearly full. The captain undertook to set the match to the powder at the last moment, when no chance remained of beating off the attack. The Versaillais might take the Panthéon if they could; woe to them in that hour, and to half the city besides!

In the meantime there were the prisoners, some dozen luckless individuals belonging to the opposite party who were held as hostages. Belleville and Montmartre had already shot its prisoners. Why should not the Latin Quarter follow so patriotic an example? It did so, and Anatole felt the blood-fever beat more fiercely than ever in his brain as he levelled his rifle on the line of manacled pale-faced men who stood with their backs against the walls of the Bibliothèque.

The prisoners were shot, and six hours later General Cissey with his brigade appeared in the square leading to the Panthéon. Timely desertions had somewhat thinned the ranks of the Communards around the building; the remainder placed themselves behind the columns, and in spots of

vantage whence they opened a relentless fire on their assailants. Anatole took his station in the colonnade under the dome, where the columns afforded him admirable shelter. He fired slowly, steadily and with deadly accuracy, bringing down his men one after the other.

By and by his gun got too hot to work properly, and he was obliged to stop, but only for a moment or two. As he lay flat down in the gutter close to the balustrade, he heard the balls spluttering against the walls behind him. "Ah, they have discovered me, the scoundrels," he said gnashing his teeth; then more quietly he added: "I prepare myself, the end approaches."

He felt the barrel; it was still too hot. He had only six cartridges left, and he must not waste them. He took his bayonet and, while crouching down, scratched a few words on the wall behind him. The square was filling with Versaillais, and a perfect hail of bullets was falling. "*Sapristi!* why did not the Captain put the match to the powder? Now is the moment; it would lay that *canaille* low." The Captain's match was safely extinguished in his own blood as he lay dead on the steps of the church; but this Anatole did not know.

The barrel is cool again. Ah, now for the six cartridges; if only that storm of bullets would slacken so that

he might take good aim. *Sacré-r-r*—he must hasten if he was to use those six cartridges with advantage. They are bringing artillery into position in front and massing men for a rush behind the corner of the Mairie.

The gun was loaded. Anatole rose to his knees; he sighted; his head swam, but surely he could not miss his shot in that solid mass below.

He never fired; but some others did. A whirlwind of bullets converged on him from the windows of the Law-School. The Versaillais had entered from the rear and were in possession of fifty windows looking straight on to the sheltered position whence Anatole had hoped to use his remaining cartridges with such advantage.

When the victorious troops examined the place they found dead Communards in every nook and cranny of the building. They had held it to the last knowing there would be no quarter on account of the slaughtered hostages, and also of the conflagrations which were still raging.

In the colonnade over the door they found a body lying in a pool of blood, and above it on the wall freshly scratched with some sharp instrument were these words: *Ici un brave a versé son sang.* It was Anatole's only monument, but it is not given to every *garçon-de-chambre* to be inscribed at the Panthéon.

## REMBRANDT'S ETCHINGS AT THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

THE superb collection of Rembrandt's etchings now exhibited in the print-room at the British Museum forms a fitting complement to the recent exhibition of paintings by the same master at Burlington House ; and the appreciation of the incessant labour bestowed on the preparation and cataloguing of some three hundred unrivalled drawings and etchings in their various states, in due chronological order, by Mr. Sidney Colvin, Keeper of the Department of Prints and Drawings, is best shown by the number of visitors. It is not a little strange to find that, whereas many previous catalogues of Rembrandt's etched works have been made, both at home and in foreign countries, it was left to the persistent efforts of an English etcher, Sir Seymour Haden, to advocate the manifestly correct arrangement which is here for the first time completed, to the advantage alike of the student and of all who are interested in art. In the result we have a clear insight into the methods adopted by the great artist at the different periods of his career. In certain table-cases, set apart for the purpose, every detail of the etcher's art is practically shown, from the smooth copper plate to the varnished and smoked surfaces ; from the acid bath to the engraved plate ready for the printer's hands, with the needles and implements used for the actual process of drawing. Then again, we are led by ocular demonstration to detect the differences between etching proper and the dry-point method whereby the artist leaves behind the varnished surfaces and acid bath,

draws upon his plate direct, and produces those rough edges to the lines which give that exquisite velvet texture to the etching, known amongst experts as *the burr*, and so extensively used by Rembrandt in the maturity of his powers. We are likewise instructed in the difference between the etcher's needle and the burin by means of which the line-engraver accomplishes his work. All this is extremely valuable from an educational and technical point of view, while the admirable catalogue, even if it will not gain the entire approval of the dealers on account of the thorough efficiency of its instruction, is the greatest boon to the visitor and a marvel of cheapness at the price of twopence. In short, these etchings are a revelation, and a visit, or series of visits, is strongly recommended to all those who do not consider themselves too old to learn. It is said that such persons do exist in the world.

Almost every etching is shewn in two or three states, concerning which Mr. Colvin adds a few opportune words of caution in his introduction to the catalogue. He is careful to explain that the term *first state* is a vague and unsatisfactory expression which is capable of several interpretations. It may even imply a rudimentary and unfinished production that does not convey the full intention of the artist's mind, which is only revealed in the additional work bestowed on the later impressions. Or again, the differences between a first and second state may be so trivial as to suggest accident rather than design. The first state of an

etching may therefore mean everything or nothing. The honest and careful examination of these magnificent works at once suggests a comparison between the genuine lover of art and the mere collector of rare prints and engravings. Not for a moment would I imply that the two cannot be united in one person ; but, on the other hand, the thorough-going collector is an animal *sui generis*, and you cannot judge him by ordinary standards.

From a purely artistic point of view there can be little doubt, I think, that the great majority of these etchings are infinitely finer in the second, or even third states, than in the earlier stage ; and this fact is more particularly noticeable when the artist has reached the plenitude of his powers,—an argument which I hope to substantiate by a reference to several of the more notable pictures in the exhibition. The collector, however, at once pounces on the often most crude first state, and gazes lovingly, if covetously, upon this rarity, which the catalogue, and possibly his own experience, tells him exists only in the Ryksmuseum at Amsterdam and in the collection of Baron Edmond de Rothschild. The rarity of the condition, or state, is placed before the intrinsic value as a work of art ; and thus we have the anomaly of an inferior production appraised at ten times the figure of a superior second or third state. It only means that the collecting mania frequently gets the better of an artistic temperament. "Give me," says the owner, "the impression that my great rivals do not possess, and I am happy. What does it matter to me if the first state is incomplete from the artist's standpoint ? It is rare, if not unique." It is just the same thing with the collector of books ; an error in the plates enhances the value of his first editions. This distinction between the artist and the

collector is curiously emphasised as we compare the successive states of these great etchings.

The first section of the exhibition includes one hundred and sixty-four specimens of the etcher's art ; and there is, perhaps, some sense of disappointment experienced as we pore over the small studies of heads or figures in which we find numerous portraits of himself, his father and mother, various peasants, and a few studies of the undraped female figure. During this period (1628-39) it will be observed that the artist changes his signature from R. H. to R. H. L., or Rembrandt in full. He appears to have been always experimenting in styles during these earlier years, oscillating between highly finished etchings of extreme fidelity and a bold freedom, which become most happily united in later periods. It is expressly stated that Nos. 51-83 and a few others (marked with an obelus in the catalogue) are either the work of pupils or spurious imitations of the master's etchings. The slight sense of disappointment to which we have referred very quickly passes away as the power of the artist is gradually expanded in more elaborate and striking subjects ; and the attention of the student is presently arrested by the more ambitious treatment of scriptural subjects, such as *The Descent from the Cross* and *The Angel appearing to the Shepherds*, even where a portion of the work may be justly ascribed to pupils.

Those who saw the wonderful collection of Rembrandt's paintings at the Amsterdam Exhibition and the more recent Winter Exhibition at Burlington House, will be prepared to find among the etchings portraits of himself in every available attitude and position. His rugged features, powerful enough in a painting or etching, are not in themselves attrac-

tive; and it is remarkable that his most successful portraits, independently of his own, are selected from among friends of the middle classes of Dutch society, while the figures of his studies are repeatedly derived from the lower classes. In the portrait of himself as a young gallant with cap, plume, and sabre (No. 118), it is amusing to find what liberties he has taken with his own homely features.

*A Woman seated on the Ground* (No. 43) has an unpleasant interest derived from the fact that it represents one of his early studies of the undraped figure in almost brutal fidelity. Throughout the range of Rembrandt's etchings and drawings, indeed, the same coarse treatment of the stolid Dutch *vrouw* is invariably depicted when he attempts the nude female figure. It is almost inexplicable that a great artist, whose splendid portraits frequently exhibit great refinement in feeling and treatment, can fail so lamentably in this respect. And yet the fact is indisputable. There is a single instance (No. 224), in a later etching where the artist's model is vigorous in drawing without any actual lack of refinement; and there the female figure is merely sketched in outline, left in an unfinished condition, in fact, an omission for which one would fain thank the great Rembrandt. Indeed, nothing much would be lost if these repulsive studies were passed by without a close inspection. No. 42, *Diana at the Bath* is another case in point. Instead of a well-knit, graceful, and lithesome body, the artist portrays a gross and fat Dutch woman more in character with a fish-wife of the Zuyder Zee. In contradistinction to this idiosyncrasy note the *Bust of an Old Man with flowing beard* (Nos. 25, 26, 27) in three positions, where the subject is drawn with

every possible refinement, and exhibits all the promise of future greatness. No. 37, *The Blind Fiddler*, again is both attractive in itself and has a special interest, inasmuch as the first state represents a pure etching, the second state is partly re-worked with the burin, or graver, and the third state is almost entirely re-worked. A little practice soon enables the inexpert to detect the difference between the lines of the needle and the graver, and also to appreciate the beauties of the dry-point method, so much employed in Rembrandt's later etchings.

Passing by a score of impressions of doubtful authenticity, we come to more ambitious subjects, groups of figures rather than single busts, or full-length studies. *The Good Samaritan* (No. 93), with a great deal of fine work in it, is somewhat of a puzzle; the dog represented in the foreground is manifestly of inferior workmanship, and parts of the picture, as suggested by Sir Seymour Haden, are perhaps the production of a pupil, who might be Ferdinand Bol. Mr. Colvin appropriately points out that the same etching in reverse by Rembrandt, without the dog, exists in the Wallace Collection. In some of the larger scriptural subjects, in which many figures are introduced, it is possible that a good deal of accessory work comes from the needles of the master's pupils. After a spirited *Cavalry Fight* (No. 97), there is a most impressive etching of *The Raising of Lazarus*, realistic to the last degree, and infinitely finer in the third state, I venture to think, than in the earlier condition. No. 99, *The Descent from the Cross*, is a grand composition, the first impression, however, being little more than a smudged plate, some accident having evidently happened to the varnished copper as there is a complete failure in the biting. It was

probably a study for Rembrandt's picture on the same subject at Munich. In the finished second state the original etching is regularly graved with the burin; and whether this was accomplished by the artist himself or by pupils under his direction, it may be unhesitatingly claimed as a composition of the first rank direct from the master's mind and hand. No. 106 has a special interest from the fact that it is a portrait of his wife Saskia Van Uylenburg, to whom he was married in the same year (1634) that the etching was completed; a pleasing bust, with pearls in the hair. Both in his paintings and etchings the same features become very familiar in ever varying form; and until the period of her death we find her influence strongly reflected in his work.

*The Angel appearing to the Shepherds* (No. 108) is a marvellously intricate picture, and peculiarly interesting on account of the different conditions of the series of plates which reveal, as it were, the methods of production. The first state is almost unique, being only known elsewhere in the Dresden Collection. The angel in glory is merely sketched in, while the shepherds and their flocks exist only in outline. It is an indication, in fact, of the artist's intentions rather than the fulfilment of a design, deeply attractive as an exhibition of constructive methods, but not for a moment to be compared with the second and third states, where the shaded detail in all its completeness is superb. For my own part I prefer the slightly altered third state, even if a light on the branch of a tree has been scratched out (as the catalogue informs us) with a penknife. The face-impressions are worth a full half-hour's study. They form a notable example of the in-

veterate collector's habit of going for the wrong thing; with him, the unfinished etching is always the best.

We are now just entering upon the threshold of all that is greatest in this wonderful collection, and the interest is keenly aroused at every step in a perplexing wealth of material. No. 126, *The Great Jewish Bride*, is probably a portrait of Saskia in the year of her marriage to the painter; a splendid full-face with the hair falling down the back in luxuriant waves. Confirmation of this supposition is to be found in the picture, *The Jewish Bride*, in The Hermitage at St. Petersburg, and also by a comparison with the etching No. 150, *Saskia as St. Catherine* (also called *The Little Jewish Bride*) on these same walls. A curious tradition is referred to by Mr. Colvin that she was the daughter of the Jewish physician, Ephraim Bonus, of whom more anon. A fine series is presented in the vigorous portrait of Jan Uytenboogaert, Preacher (No. 127), the first state being of such rarity that only two others appear to be extant. A wonderfully forcible character is here most powerfully portrayed. As usual, the finished impression is the most admirable, although some additions are said to be by another hand, the dark-curtained arch, for instance, and some rather heavy work on the left; these, however, in no way detract from the remarkable brilliancy of the plate. A little lower down the room we reach No. 134, *Christ before Pilate*, in which the nobility and grandeur of the central figure are superb. Pilate and the group of men near to him are left as blank spaces in the first proof, a habit that Albert Dürer also had in his engraving. There is undoubtedly work by other hands in this etching, notably in the disproportionate length of the hand of the soldier who addresses the crowd

below, a figure which could hardly have been drawn by Rembrandt himself. The third state, partly worked with the graver, is incredibly fine. No. 156 represents very coarse Dutch figures as Adam and Eve. In No. 158 one portion of the studies is possibly intended for Saskia ill in bed; and a little close comparison suggests that the etching served as a study for No. 157, *The Death of the Virgin*, a strangely fantastic subject somewhat unequally treated. The central figure is good enough, as likewise is the man reading from the scriptures in the foreground; but the High Priest, who stands as a gorgeous figure beside the bed, must be over eight feet high, another instance of an error in proportion which can surely not have proceeded from the artist himself. No. 162, *The Gold-Weigher*, is another most powerful portrait. In the first state the face is but lightly indicated; the second state is very brilliant, with the shading of the features finished, and possessing that velvety texture in the picture which we learn to look for in the dry-point etchings. A very fine portrait of himself in rich attire brings us to the end of the first period in the year 1639. There can be no doubt that the death of his wife Saskia exercised a profound effect on the artist, adding, if possible, to the intensity and marvellous power of his work; his art now became his sole life.

The second period covers the years 1640-1649, and it may not be out of place to dwell for a few moments upon the brilliant group of painters of European fame besides Rembrandt Van Ryn, who had raised the art of etching to a high degree of perfection, and made it a medium for the exposition of their work. Among those famous artists, known more generally perhaps as painters, who

worked with the needle, the great Flemish artist Van Dyck had but recently passed away (1641), and the younger Teniers still flourished in full vigour. Turning to France, we find Claude Gellée (better known as Claude Lorrain) contemporary with Rembrandt, and hard at work on his landscape-studies so imbued with the spirit of classic times. Jacques Callot, a notable etcher had lately died. The Dutch painters, who were invariably accomplished etchers, were represented by a brilliant group of names, Paul Potter, Albert Cuyp, A. Van de Velde, Jacob Van Ruysdael, Hercules Seghers (who influenced Rembrandt), Jan Van de Velde, Simon de Vlieger, Van Ostade, Jacob Duck, Berchem who had fallen under Italian influences, and many other engravers of great repute. Ferdinand Bol, of Dordrecht, must be reckoned Rembrandt's leading pupil, while amongst those who palpably fell under his influence are Jan Livens, H. Leyden, Van Vleit of Delft, Salomon Koninck, Eeckhart, and P. de Witt. Some idea of the pains taken by Mr. Colvin in the preparation of this exhibition may be gained from the fact that upwards of five hundred specimens have been mounted and framed in illustration of the work of Rembrandt's principal contemporaries. He himself was a follower of no school, although he had been apprenticed to the engravers Swanenburgh and Lastman. When he had finally chosen his career he devoted himself for three years to studying painting and etching in his own way. His peculiar genius found expression in a style of his own creation, wholly uninfluenced by Southern or classical schools; though when it is conclusively proved that several of his pupils were under the spell of Van Dyck, it is reasonable also to suppose that Rembrandt him-

self to some extent felt his power, even if the styles of the two artists are so totally different.

From the fact that Rembrandt only commenced to etch landscape subjects after the loss of his wife, it has been surmised that he retired into the country for a time after that event. In examining such a fine work as *The Landscape with the Three Trees*, one feels that the artist might have achieved the greatest reputation both as a painter and etcher of landscape, had he been so disposed. It is a charming example of the master's style, with a breadth of treatment and the most exquisite balance of light and shade. At first sight, the heavy slanting lines on the left foreground, representing the rays of light from the clouds above, may appear excessive; but a close study shows how artfully they intensify the effect of the middle distance. In some other etchings the rigidity of the rays of light have a slightly incongruous effect. No. 178, *The Angel departing from the Family of Tobias*, is a curious work, the celestial visitor being represented by a fat Dutchman, whose substantial legs and broad flat feet, all uncovered, are exhibited in the act of disappearing through the window. The figure is anything but angelic, and recalls a well-known engraving of Hogarth's in which the disappointed lover makes an ignominious exit through the window. To compensate for this droll representation there is a fine portrait of Cornelis Claesz Anslo, Preacher, with plenty of dry-point revealed in the technique, a refined study of a thoughtful man which forms the first of a grand series of portraits belonging to this second period of Rembrandt's etchings. *Six's Bridge* (No. 209) is a bold and vigorous study in outline drawn with every indication of haste on the artist's

part. The story is that a servant had forgotten to bring the mustard-pot for a picnic by the river or canal-side. The fellow had been sent back to town to remedy the omission, and Rembrandt, knowing his dilatoriness, undertook to complete an etching during his absence; in this bold effect we see the result, completed in due time according to the artist's promise.

Let us now turn again to the portraits. That of Jan Cornelius Sylvius is exceedingly fine, but even that is overshadowed by the superb study of the Jewish physician, Ephraim Bonus. This incomparable picture shows us a man of most intellectual countenance descending the staircase, as if in deep and anxious thought concerning some serious case on which he has been engaged. As he descends from the sick-room, the face is laden with deep care. Note the black ring on his finger in the first state, and the play of the light on the cloak. At the Holford Sale £1,900 was paid for an impression by Baron Edmond de Rothschild. Only two others are known to exist. The second state, though less rare, is equally fine; but the ring is white instead of black, whence comes the fictitious value set on the first state. A succession of glorious portraits follow, perhaps the most refined work in the whole collection being found in the incomparable portrait of Jan Six, the Burgomaster of Amsterdam and firm friend of Rembrandt. If there is anything in the way of criticism to be urged against this rich and effective etching, it is a suspicion of effeminacy depicted where all around is remarkable for rugged strength and determination of countenance.

No. 233, *Christ Healing the Sick*, otherwise known as *The Hundred Guilder Print*, brings the second series of etchings to a fitting con-

elusion. There are no less than four impressions shown of this rare and marvellous picture which, for comparative effect of light and shade and force of dramatic expression, surpass anything that even Rembrandt ever accomplished with the needle. The nobility of the central figure stands out prominent amid an astonishing wealth of detail, and reveals a depth of religious fervour in the mind of the artist which is unsuspected in the earlier work.

The third portion of the etchings covers the period from 1650 to 1661. For a few years we find attractive landscapes, with all the richness of burr due to the dry-point process. Typical among these is *The Flight into Egypt* (No. 265) which has the velvet texture so strongly developed that a very close inspection is needed to discern the figures of Joseph and the Virgin and Child riding on the ass. The landscape suggests a bold hilly country, with a somewhat park-like profusion of foliage and timber, which is hardly in character with the Holy Land; but it is, nevertheless, an exceedingly fine picture. Another sacred subject, *The Adoration of the Shepherds*, is treated as a night-piece; the light is beautifully concentrated on the faces, the figures being chiefly lost in the general sense of darkness produced in the dry-point method of working, and the gloom even exaggerated. The vigorous series of portraits is continued in this third group of etchings, although Rembrandt has now ceased to reproduce his own features. Clement de Jonghe, printer and artist, is portrayed as a most contented and benevolent old gentleman, well satisfied with life in relationship to himself and generally to all mankind. Then we reach a most wonderful study of Dr. Faustus in his study, watching a magic disk. There is a certain supernatural effect

in the treatment of the subject which is exceedingly happy, and the lights and shadows are exquisitely subtle. No. 268, *The Golf-player*, is somewhat of a curiosity in its suggestion that the game was actually played in Holland in the year 1654, although the ball depicted is about the size of a turnip. Where, one would ask, did the all-prevailing pastime originate?

*Lievens Willemsz Van Copenol, Writing-Master*, is represented in a small plate (No. 262), and this may well be compared with the extraordinary series (six in number) of a large-plate portrait of the same individual (No. 295), which contains a great deal of Rembrandt's most powerful work. In the very next case are placed some more studies of the undraped female figure, of which I can only wish it were possible to echo Mr. Colvin's sentiment that the treatment is more refined than in the earlier examples. The same radical defects, however, are always noticeable in this respect. Happier in every detail are the portraits which follow, including the elder Jan Lutma, goldsmith and sculptor, which is in itself sufficient to stamp Rembrandt as a genius of the first rank. In sheer bewilderment we continue to examine portrait after portrait of incredible beauty and finish. The two Haarings, for example, father and son, are world-renowned prints, and associated with the artist's own painful history in a remarkable manner. Jacob Haaring was the warden of the Debtors' prison at Amsterdam; and Thomas Jacobsz Haaring, the son, sold Rembrandt's effects in his capacity as auctioneer. Yet another magnificent etching is found in the portrait of Arnold Tholinx, Inspector of Medical Colleges in Amsterdam; it is exceedingly rich in effect through the contrast of the white paper and the burr. Apparently the

first state is both costly and rare, seeing that at the Griffith Sale an impression was purchased for £1,500. Another fine series represents Abraham Francen, art-dealer; and this concludes the most prominent efforts in portraiture.

The more we study these grand prints, the greater becomes the fascination, until the figures seem veritably to live again, and we learn that colour is not indispensable in art. The last signed and dated etching, it will be observed, was executed in 1661, some eight years before his death, the close of his life having been passed amid considerable hardship and misfortune. To sum up the man as seen through the medium of his art, I cannot do better than quote Mr. Colvin's words.

Far profounder elements were his unrivalled insight into the strength and pathos of human character and feeling, not disdaining the common, the degraded, or the grotesque; and his acute and wholly original sense of the magic of light and shade and atmospheric mystery, as enveloping and transfiguring all the objects of vision, and revealing in them a thousand subtleties of form, colour,

and relation, unperceived by common eyes. From the gift of nature and from indefatigable self-training he derived an unequalled command, which steadily strengthened from youth to age, of the technical resources required for expressing these powers and sensibilities on canvas.

In addition to the large numbers of etchings there are about ninety specimens of Rembrandt's vigorous drawings in chalk, bistre-wash, or Indian ink, exhibited here in separate cases, which serve well to illustrate the transitions through which the master passed in pursuance of his art. The most interesting examples are those which palpably served as studies for the more elaborate paintings and etchings. A similar collection of drawings by Rembrandt was exhibited in one of the rooms at Burlington House last winter. There are bold and even startling effects produced in many of these rough sketches which should prove most valuable to students, and the master-mind is invariably revealed in the character of even the rudest productions.

C. PARKINSON.

## SAVROLA.

(A MILITARY AND POLITICAL ROMANCE.)

BY WINSTON SPENCER CHURCHILL.

## CHAPTER IV.

It was the President's custom to rise early, but before doing so he invariably received the newspapers and read such remarks as dealt with the policy of the Government or criticised its actions. This morning his literature was exceptionally plentiful. All the papers had leading-articles on the restriction of the franchise, and the great riot which had followed its announcement. He first opened **THE HOUR**, the organ of orthodox mediocrity, which usually cautiously supported the Government in consideration of certain pieces of news with which it was from time to time favoured. In a column and a half of print **THE HOUR** gently regretted that the President had been unable to restore the franchises unimpaired, and thus gratified the bulk of its readers. In a second column it expressed its severe disapproval (*unqualified condemnation* was the actual term) of the disgraceful riot which had led to such *deplorable consequences*; it thus repaid the President for sending round the text of the English Note, which had arrived the night before, and which it printed *verbatim* with pomp and circumstance as coming from Our Special Correspondent in London. **THE COURTIER**, the respectable morning journal of the upper classes, regretted that so unseemly a riot should have taken place at the beginning of the season, and expressed a hope that it would not in any way

impair the brilliancy of the State Ball which was to take place on the 7th. It gave an excellent account of the President's first ministerial dinner, with the *menu* duly appended, and it was concerned to notice that Señor Louvet, Minister of the Interior, had been suffering from an indisposition which prevented his attending the function. **THE DIURNAL GUSHER**, a paper with an enormous circulation, refrained from actual comments, but published an excellent account of the *massacre* to the harrowing details of which it devoted much fruity sentiment and morbid imagination.

These were practically the organs on which the Government relied for support, and the President always read them first to fortify himself against the columns of abuse with which the Radical, Popular, and Democratic Press saluted him, his Government, and all his works. The worst result of an habitual use of strong language is that, when a special occasion really does arise, there is no way of marking it. **THE FABIAN**, **THE SUNSPOT**, and **THE RISING TIDE** had already exhausted every epithet in their extensive vocabularies on other and less important incidents. Now that a severe fusilade had been made upon the citizens and an ancient privilege attacked, they were reduced to comparative moderation as the only outlet for their feelings. They had compared the Head of the State so often and so vividly to Nero and Iscariot, very much to the advantage

of those worthies, that it was difficult to know how they could deal with him now. They nevertheless managed to find a few unused expressions, and made a great point of the Ministerial dinner as being an instance of his "brutal disregard of the commonest instincts of humanity." THE SUNSPOT was thought by its readers to have been particularly happy in alluding to the Ministers as, "Indulging in a foul orgie of gluttony, and dipping their blood-stained fingers in choice dishes, while the bodies of their victims lay unburied and unavenged."

Having finished his perusal the President pushed the last paper off the bed and frowned. He cared nothing for criticism, but he knew the power of the Press and he knew that it reflected as well as influenced public opinion. There could be no doubt that the balance was rising against him.

At breakfast he was moody and silent, and Lucile tactfully refrained from irritating him by the laboured commonplaces of mutual conversation. By nine o'clock he was always at work and this morning he began earlier than usual. The Secretary was already busily writing at his table when Molaro entered. He rose and bowed, a formal bow, which seemed an assertion of equality rather than a tribute of respect. The President nodded and walked to his table on which such parts of correspondence as needed his personal attention were neatly arranged. He sat down and began to read. Occasionally he uttered an exclamation of assent or disapproval, and his pencil was often employed to express his decisions and opinions. From time to time Miguel collected the papers he had thus dealt with and carried them to the inferior secretaries in the adjoining room, whose duty it was to elaborate into the stately pomposity of official language such

phrases as, "Curt Refusal," "Certainly not," "Apply to War Office," "Gushing reply," "I do not agree," "See last year's Report."

Lucile, also, had letters to read and write. Having finished these she determined to take a drive in the Park. For the last few weeks, since, in fact, they had returned from their summer residence, she had discontinued what had been in former years her usual practice; but after the scenes and riots of the day before she felt it her duty to display a courage which she did not feel. It might help her husband, for her beauty was such that an artistic people invariably showed her respect. It could at least do no harm, and besides she was weary of the palace and its gardens. With this intention her carriage was ordered, and she was about to enter it, when a young man arrived at the door, who saluted her gravely.

It was the boast of the citizens of the Republic of Laurania that they never brought politics into private life, or private life into politics. How far they justified it will appear later. The present situation had undoubtedly strained the principle to the full, but formal civilities were still exchanged between political antagonists. Lucile, therefore, who knew the great Democrat slightly, smiled, bowed in return, and asked him whether he came to see the President.

"Yes," he replied; "I have an appointment."

"Public matters, I suppose?" she inquired with the suspicion of a smile.

"Yes," he repeated somewhat abruptly.

"How tiresome you all are," she said daringly, "with your public businesses and solemn looks. I hear of nothing but matters of State from morning till night, and now, when I fly the palace for an hour's relaxation, they meet me at the very door."

Savrola smiled. It was impossible to resist her charm. The admiration he had always felt for her beauty and her wit asserted itself in spite of the watchful and determined attitude of mind he had assumed as a preparation for his interview with the President. He was a young man, and Jupiter was not the only planet he admired. "Your Excellency," he said, "must acquit me of all intention."

"I do," she answered laughing, "and release you from all further punishment."

She signed to the coachman and, bowing, drove off.

He entered the palace and was ushered by a footman, resplendent in the blue and buff liveries of the Republic, into an ante-room. A young officer of the Guard, the Lieutenant who had commanded the escort on the previous day, received him. The President would be disengaged in a few minutes. The other members of the deputation had not yet arrived; in the meantime, would he take a chair? The Lieutenant regarded him dubiously, as one might view some strange animal, harmless enough to look at, but about whose strength, when roused, there were extraordinary stories. He had been brought up in the most correct military ideas: the people (by which he meant the mob) were "swine;" their leaders were the same, with an adjective prefixed; democratic institutions, Parliament, and such like, were all "rot." It therefore appeared that he and Savrola would find few topics in common. But besides his good looks and good manners, the young soldier had other attainments; his men knew him as "all right" and "all there," while the Lancers of the Guard polo-team regarded him as a most promising Two.

Savrola, whose business it was to know everything, inquired respecting the project, lately mooted by the Lauranian Cavalry, of sending a polo-team to England to compete in the great annual tournament at Hurlingham. Lieutenant Tiro (for that was his name) addressed himself to the subject with delight. They disputed as to who should be taken as Back. The discussion was only interrupted by the entrance of the Mayor and Renos, and the subaltern went off to inform the President that the deputation waited.

"I will see them at once," said Molara; "show them up here."

The deputation were accordingly conducted up the stairs to the President's private room. He rose and received them with courtesy. Godoy stated the grievances of the citizens. He recalled the protests they had made against the unconstitutional government of the last five years, and their delight at the President's promise to call the Estates together. He described their bitter disappointment at the restriction of the franchise, and their keen desire that it should be fully restored. He dilated on their indignation at the cruelty with which the soldiers had shot down unarmed men, and finally declared that, as Mayor, he could not vouch for their continued loyalty to the President or their respect for his person. Renos spoke in the same strain, dwelling particularly on the legal aspect of the President's late action, and on the gravity of its effects as a precedent to posterity.

Molara replied at some length. He pointed out the disturbed state of the country, and particularly of the capital; he alluded to the disorders of the late war and the sufferings it had caused to the mass of the people. What the State

wanted was strong stable government. As things became more settled the franchise should be extended until it would ultimately be completely restored. In the meanwhile, what was there to complain about? Law and order were maintained; the public service was well administered; the people enjoyed peace and security. More than that, a vigorous foreign policy held the honour of the country high. They should have an instance.

He turned and requested Miguel to read the reply to the English Note on the African Dispute. The Secretary stood up and read the paper in question, his soft, purring voice proving well suited to emphasising the insults it contained.

"And that, Gentlemen," said the President, when it was finished, "is addressed to one of the greatest military and naval powers in the world."

Godoy and Renos were silent. Their patriotism was roused and their pride gratified; but Savrola smiled provokingly. "It will take more than despatches," he said, "to keep the English out of the African sphere, or to reconcile the people of Laurania to your rule."

"And if stronger measures should be necessary," said the President, "rest assured they will be taken."

"After the events of yesterday we need no such assurances."

The President ignored the taunt. "I know the English Government," he continued; "they will not appeal to arms."

"And I," said Savrola, "know the Lauranian people. I am not so confident."

There was a long pause. Both men faced each other, and their eyes met. It was the look of two swordsmen who engage, and it was the look of two bitter enemies; they appeared

to measure distances and calculate chances. Then Savrola turned away, the ghost of a smile still lingering on his lips; but he had read the President's heart and he felt as if he had looked into hell.

"It is a matter of opinion, Sir," said Molara at last.

"It will soon be a matter of history."

"Other tales will have to be told before," said the President, and then with great formality: "I am obliged to you, Mr. Mayor and Gentlemen, for representing the dangerous elements of disorder which exist among certain classes of the people. You may rely on every precaution being taken to prevent an outbreak. I beg you will keep me further informed. Good-morning."

The only course open appeared to be the door, and the deputation accordingly withdrew, after Savrola had thanked the President for his audience and had assured him that he would lose no opportunity of bringing home to him the hostile attitude of the citizens. On the way downstairs they were met by Lucile, who had returned unexpectedly early from her drive. She saw by the expression of their faces that a heated discussion had taken place. Godoy and Renos she passed unnoticed, but she smiled merrily at Savrola, as if to convey to him that she was uninterested by politics and could not understand how people ever managed to get excited about them. The smile did not deceive him; he knew too much of her tastes and talents, but he admired her all the more for her acting.

He walked home. The interview had not been altogether unsatisfactory. He had never hoped to convince the President; that indeed was hardly likely; but they had expressed the views of the people, and Godoy and Renos had already sent copies

of their remarks to the newspapers, so that the party could not complain of their leaders' inaction at such a crisis. He thought he had frightened Molara, if indeed it were possible to frighten such a man; at any rate he had made him angry. When he thought of this he was glad. Why? He had always hitherto repressed such unphilosophic and futile emotions so far as possible, but somehow to-day he felt his dislike of the President was invested with a darker tinge. And then his mind reverted to Lucile. What a beautiful woman she was! How full of that instinctive knowledge of human feelings which is the source of all true wit! Molara was a lucky man to have such a wife. Decidedly he hated him personally, but that, of course, was on account of his unconstitutional conduct.

When he reached his rooms, Moret was awaiting him, much excited and evidently angry. He had written several long letters to his leader, acquainting him with his unaltered decision to sever all connection with him and his party; but he had torn them all up, and was now resolved to tell him in plain words.

Savrola saw his look. "Ah, Louis," he cried, "I am glad you are here. How good of you to come! I have just left the President; he is recalcitrant; he will not budge an inch. I need your advice. What course shall we adopt?"

"What has happened?" asked the young man, sulkily but curiously.

Savrola related the interview with graphic terseness. Moret listened attentively and then said, still with great ill-humour: "Physical force is the only argument he understands. I am for raising the people."

"Perhaps you are right," said Savrola reflectively. "I am half inclined to agree with you."

Moret argued his proposition with vigour and earnestness, and never had his leader seemed so agreeable to the violent measures he proposed. For half an hour they discussed the point. Savrola still appeared unconvinced; he looked at his watch. "It is past two o'clock," he said; let us lunch here and thresh the matter out."

They did so. The luncheon was excellent, and the host's arguments became more and more convincing. At last, with the coffee, Moret admitted that perhaps it was better to wait, and they parted with great cordiality.

#### CHAPTER V.

"THAT," said the President to his confidential secretary, so soon as the door had closed on the retiring deputation, "is over, but we shall have plenty more in the future. Savrola will most certainly be elected for the Central Division, and we shall then have the pleasure of listening to him in the Senate."

"Unless," added Miguel, "anything should happen."

The President who knew his man well, understood the implication. "No, it is no good; we cannot do that. Fifty years ago it might have been possible. People won't stand that sort of thing nowadays; even the army might have scruples. So long as he keeps within the law, I don't see how we can touch him constitutionally."

"He is a great force, a great force; sometimes, I think, the greatest in Laurania. Every day he grows stronger. Presently the end will come," said the Secretary slowly and thoughtfully. As the partner of Molara's dangers, no less than of his actions, he had a claim to be heard. "I think the end is coming," he con-

tinued ; "perhaps quite soon,—unless—" he paused.

"I tell you it can't be done. Any accident that happened would be attributed to me. It would mean a revolution here, and close every asylum abroad."

"There are other ways besides force, physical force."

"None that I can see, and he is a strong man."

"So was Samson, nevertheless the Philistines spoiled him."

"Through a woman. I don't believe he has ever been in love."

"That is no reason against the future."

"Wanted a Delilah," said the President dryly. "Perhaps you will find one for him."

The Secretary's eyes wandered round the room artlessly, and paused for a moment on a photograph of Lucile.

"How dare you, Sir ! You are a scoundrel ! You have not an ounce of virtue in you !"

"We have been associated for some time, General." He always called him *General* on these occasions ; it reminded the President of various little incidents which had taken place when they had worked together during the war. "Perhaps that is the cause."

"You are impertinent."

"My interests are concerned ; I too have enemies. You know very well how much my life would be worth without the protection of the Secret Police. I only remember with whom and for whom these things were done."

"Perhaps I am hasty, Miguel, but there is a limit, even between—" He was going to say *friends* but Miguel interposed *accomplices*. "Well," said Molara, "I do not care what you call it. What is your proposition ?"

"The Philistines," replied Miguel, "spoiled Samson, but Delilah had to cut his hair first."

"Do you mean that she should implore him to hold his hand ?"

"No, I think that would be useless ; but if he were compromised—"

"But she,—she would not consent. It would involve her."

"She need not necessarily know. Another object for making his acquaintance might be suggested. It would come as a surprise to her."

"You are a scoundrel,—an infernal scoundrel," said the President quietly.

Miguel smiled, as one who receives a compliment. "The matter," he said, "is too serious for the ordinary rules of decency and honour. Special cases demand special remedies."

"She would never forgive me."

"The forgiveness would rest with you. Your charity would enable you to pardon an uncommitted crime. You have only to play the jealous husband, and own your mistake later on."

"And he ?"

"Fancy the great popular leader, Patriot, Democrat, what not, discovered fawning on the tyrant's wife ! Why the impropriety alone would disgust many. And more than that,—observe him begging for mercy, grovelling at the President's feet,—a pretty picture ! It would ruin him ; ridicule alone would kill him."

"It might," said Molara. The picture pleased him.

"It must. It is the only chance that I can see, and it need cost you nothing. Every woman is secretly flattered by the jealousy of the man she loves, even if he be her husband."

"How do you know these things ?" asked Molara looking at the ugly pinched figure and glistening hair of his companion.

"I know," said Miguel with a grin of odious pride. The suggestion

of his appetites was repulsive. The President was conscious of disgust. "Mr. Secretary Miguel," he said, with the air of one who has made up his mind, "I must request you not to speak to me of this matter again. I consider it shows less to the advantage of your heart than of your head."

"I see by your Excellency's manner that further allusion is unnecessary."

"Have you the report of the Agricultural Committee for last year? Good,—please have a *précis* made of it; I want some facts. The country may be kept, even if we lose the capital; that means a good part of the army."

Thus the subject dropped. Each understood the other, and behind lay the spur of danger.

After the President had finished the morning's business he rose to leave the room, but before he did so he turned to Miguel and said abruptly: "It would be a great convenience for us to know what course the Opposition intends to pursue on the opening of the Senate, would it not?"

"Assuredly."

"How can we induce Savrola to speak? He is incorruptible."

"There is another method."

"I tell you physical force is not to be thought of."

"There is another method."

"And that," said the President, "I directed you not to speak of again."

"Precisely," said the Secretary and resumed his writing.

The garden into which Molara walked was one of the most beautiful and famous in a country where all vegetation attained luxuriant forms. The soil was fertile, the sun hot, and the rains plentiful. It displayed an attractive disorder. The Lauranians were no admirers of that peculiar taste which finds beauty in the exact

arrangement of an equal number of small trees of symmetrical shape in mathematical designs, or in the creation of geometrical figures by means of narrow paths with box-hedges. They were an unenlightened people, and their gardens displayed a singular contempt for geometry and precision. Great blazes of colour arranged in pleasing contrasts were the lights, and cool green arbours the shades of their rural pictures. Their ideal of gardening was to make every plant grow as freely as if directed by nature, and to as high perfection as if cultivated by art. If the result was not artistic, it was at least beautiful.

The President, however, cared very little for flowers or their arrangement; he was, he said, too busy a man to have anything to do with the beauties of colour, harmony, or line. Neither the tints of the rose nor the smell of the jasmine awakened in him more than the rudimentary physical pleasures which are natural and involuntary. He liked to have a good flower-garden, because it was the right thing to have, because it enabled him to take people there and talk to them personally on political matters, and because it was convenient for afternoon receptions. But he himself took no interest in it. The kitchen-garden appealed to him more; his practical soul rejoiced more in an onion than an orchid.

He was full of thought after his conversation with Miguel, and turned down the shady path which led to the fountains with long, hasty strides. Things were looking desperate. It was, as Miguel had said, a question of time, unless,—unless Savrola were removed or discredited. He refrained from precisely formulating the idea that had taken possession of his mind. He had done many things in the rough days of the war, when he was a struggling man, the memory of which

was not pleasant. He remembered a brother-officer, a rising man, the colonel of a regiment, who had been a formidable rival; at a critical moment he had withheld the supports, and left it to the enemy to remove one obstacle from his path. Then another tale came into his mind, which also was not a pretty one; a tale of a destroyed treaty and a broken truce; of men, who had surrendered to terms, shot against the wall of the fort they had held so long. He also recalled with annoyance the methods he had adopted to extract information from the captured spy; five years of busy life, of success and fortune, had not obscured the memory of the man's face as it writhed in suffering. But this new idea seemed the most odious of all. Though he was unscrupulous, like many men in history or modern life he had tried to put away a discreditable past. Henceforth, he had said, when he obtained power, he would abandon such methods: they would no longer be necessary; and yet, here was the need already. Besides Lucile was so beautiful: he loved her in his hard way for that alone; and she was such a consort, so tactful, so brilliant, that he admired and valued her from a purely official standpoint. If she ever knew, she would never forgive him. She never should know but still he hated the idea.

But what other course remained? He thought of the faces of the crowd the day before, of Savrola, of the stories which reached him from the army, of other tales of a darker and more mysterious kind,—tales of strange federations and secret societies, which suggested murder as well as revolution. The tide was rising; it was dangerous to tarry.

And then the alternative presented itself; flight, abdication, a squalid existence in some foreign country

despised, insulted, suspected; and then exiles always lived to a great age, he had heard. He would not think of it; he would die first; nothing but death should drag him from the palace, and he would fight to the last. His mind returned to the starting-point of his reflections. Here was a chance, the one solution which seemed possible; it was not an agreeable one, but it was that or none. He had reached the end of the path and, turning the corner, saw Lucile seated by the fountain. It was a beautiful picture. She saw his preoccupied look and rose to meet him. "What is the matter, Antonio? You look worried."

"Things are going wrong with us, my dear. Savrola, the deputation, the newspapers, and, above all, the reports I receive of the people, are ominous and alarming."

"I noticed black looks this morning when I drove. Do you think there is danger?"

"I do," he answered in his precise official manner, "grave danger."

"I wish I could help you," she said, "but I am only a woman. What can I do?" He did not answer and she continued: "Señor Savrola seems a kind man."

"He will ruin us."

"Surely not."

"We shall have to fly the country, if indeed they allow us to do that."

She turned paler. "But I know what men look like; there is a sympathy between us; he is no fanatic."

"There are powers behind and beneath him of which he knows little, which he cannot control, but which he has invoked."

"Can you do nothing?"

"I cannot arrest him; he is too popular, and besides he has broken no law. He will go on. In a fortnight are the elections; he will be returned in spite of my precautions;

then the trouble will begin." He paused, and then, speaking as if to himself, continued : " If we could learn what he means to do, perhaps we might defeat it."

" Can I not help you ? " she asked quickly. " I know him ; I think he likes me. He might whisper to me what he would not tell to others." She thought of many victories in the past.

" My darling," said Molara, " why should you spoil your life by mixing in the darker side of politics ? I would not ask you."

" But I want to. I will try, if it would help you."

" It might do much more."

" Very well, I will find out for you ; in a fortnight you shall know. He must come to the State Ball ; I will meet him there."

" I am loth to let you talk to such a man, but I know your wit, and the need is great. But will he come ? "

" I will write him a note with the invitation," she said, " laugh at politics, and advise him to keep his private life at least free from them. I think he will come ; if not, I will find some other way of seeing him."

Molara looked at her with admiration. At no time did he love her more than when he realised of what use she was to him. " I leave it to you, then. I fear you will fail, but if you can do it, you may have saved the State. If not, no harm will have been done."

" I shall succeed," she answered confidently, and rising from her seat began to walk towards the house. She saw from her husband's manner that he would like to be alone.

He remained seated there for a long time, staring into the water in which the fat, lazy, gold fish swam placidly. His face wore the expression of one who has swallowed some nasty thing.

*(To be continued.)*